

Aberdeen firm fined after man suffers horrific injuries cleaning machine

An Aberdeen joinery and manufacturing company has been fined £9,400 after one of its workers suffered horrific injuries while cleaning a machine.

Brian Strachan was working for Hall & Tawse Joinery Limited, a manufacturer of timber windows and doors, at their premises on Granitehill Road on 1 November 2018. The then 41-year-old was conducting a thorough clean of a UV Lacquer Line machine (which are used to apply a lacquer finish to veneered door and panel products using two sets of sanders and lacquer machines) prior to its use in a production run later that day.

During this process, Mr Strachan, who is now 46, noticed lacquer hanging from the lid of the machine and reached for it as he turned to the control panel to isolate the machine. However, as he did so, the glove on the little finger of his right hand got caught in the moving rollers, causing his arm to become entangled and trapped within the machine.

This resulted in his right forearm being crushed between the rollers and he underwent surgery that day for 'degloving' injuries that he had suffered from his elbow to his hand. His injuries required multiple surgeries to treat and reconstruct his forearm with skin grafts and he ended up spending 13 days in hospital.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the machine's rollers continued rotating when Mr Strachan opened the lid which demonstrated that the interlock device was not working on the day of the accident. The device was found to be defeated (with the fastenings of the actuator unbolted and the actuator stuck within the switch).

Hall & Tawse Joinery Limited failed to carry out a risk assessment of the machine at the time of the incident, which should have been conducted prior to the machine's use and would have been followed by an effective check procedure that would have highlighted the defeated interlock device.

Hall & Tawse Joinery Limited pleaded guilty to breaching sections 2 and 33(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974 and were fined £9,400 on 9 November 2023 at Aberdeen Sheriff Court.

Speaking after the case HSE inspector Simon Dunford said: "This case highlights the importance of regular pro-active maintenance and inspection of work equipment, to ensure equipment does not deteriorate and is functioning as it should.

"In this case Hall and Tawse Joiner Limited failed to effectively maintain their equipment to reduce the risk of injury."

Notes to editors:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.