

Double-investigation leads to fine for North East car parts manufacturer Faltec Europe Limited

A South Tyneside car parts manufacturer has been fined £1.6million after a Legionnaires' disease outbreak and an explosion occurred at the same plant within a year.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigated and have prosecuted Faltec Europe Limited in relation to both incidents.

Five people fell seriously ill following the Legionnaires' disease outbreak and one worker suffered serious burns from the explosion incident.

Newcastle Crown Court heard that between October 2014 and June 2015, two employees, two agency workers and a local resident fell seriously ill with Legionnaires Disease. HSE found the illness was caused by Faltec's failure to effectively manage its water cooling systems within the factory, causing the legionella bacteria within the water supply to grow to potentially lethal levels.

In relation to the explosion incident, the same court heard that on 16 October 2015, an operator attempted to recover a part that came off production rollers at the plant in Boldon. There is an explosive atmosphere within the machine during normal production. The part he was retrieving came into contact with an electrostatic grid, which created a spark and caused a dust explosion. The 19-year-old man suffered first degree burns to his face and arms. HSE found that adequate measures were not put in place to protect operators from explosion risks, this was despite previous explosions having occurred.

Concerning the legionella incident, Faltec Europe Limited of Didcot Way, Boldon in Tyne and Wear pleaded guilty to breaches of Section 2 (1) and 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA). In relation to the explosion, the company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of HSWA. The company was fined £1.6million and ordered to pay costs of £75,159.73 and a victim surcharge of £120.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspectors Fiona McGarry and Michael Kingston said: "The explosion and outbreak of Legionnaires' disease at the Faltec factory had a major impact on the six people affected, with some suffering long-term ill-health as a result. In addition, the incidents raised concern amongst other employees and the local community.

"Supported by colleagues from Public Health England and South Tyneside Council HSE investigated and identified breaches in both cases. In pleading guilty to three charges under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 the company have acknowledged these breaches.

“Legionnaires’ disease is a relatively uncommon, but potentially fatal form of pneumonia. When water systems are not properly controlled and maintained there is a risk of exposing both employees and the wider community to Legionella bacteria. Following the outbreak, and HSE enforcement, improved control measures have now been implemented by the company to better manage the Legionella risks at the site.”

“Furthermore, where dangerous substances create a fire and explosion risk, there needs to be adequate control measures in place to prevent an explosion or mitigate the consequences. The risks should have been assessed before the machine was put into use and the previous incidents should have resulted in a comprehensive review by a competent person. Operators need to be trained on the fire and explosion risks and understand the required controls”.

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. www.hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Further information regarding the risks associated with Legionnaires disease is available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/>
5. Further information regarding the risks associated fire and explosion is available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/fireandexplosion/index.htm>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

[North east sawmill fined after employee has his leg amputated](#)

A sawmill in north east England has been fined after a serious incident at its site resulted in an employee having his leg amputated above the knee.

Sunderland Magistrates’ Court heard that, in July 2016, an employee of A & J Scott Limited attempted to clear a blockage on the conveyor feed and edger machine. As he climbed onto the machine he was caught by the moving parts, pushed forward and his trailing leg was amputated below the knee by the saw blade.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had not ensured that measures were taken to prevent access to the dangerous moving parts of the sawmilling equipment. They also failed to safeguard employees who would be working at height whilst on the machine and take steps to prevent employees standing on the machinery whilst it was live, and in a state that it could be turned on at any time.

A & J Scott Limited of Station Sawmills, Wooperton, Alnwick pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £400,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,392.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Paul Wilson said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers.

"Had this been done then this worker would not have received life changing injuries".

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[Company fined after workers put in danger](#)

A company has been fined after workers were spotted carrying out unsafe work on various roofs.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court heard that, on three separate occasions in 2016, a director of Quality Food Products (Aberdeen) Ltd carried out work at height when there were no suitable or sufficient measures in place to prevent him, nor the employees who were assisting him, falling a distance likely to cause personal injury.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that on one of

those occasions the director and an employee accessed the roof by standing on the prongs of a fork lift truck which had a wooden pallet attached to it. During the course of the works they were seen to toss waste materials to the ground. Two other incidents were detailed which related to works carried out primarily by the director with brief assistance from an employee.

Photographs of the illegal activities were taken by concerned witnesses and HSE was alerted.

Quality Food Products (Aberdeen) Ltd of West Tullos Industrial Estate, Aberdeen, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6 (3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and was fined £10,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Connor Gibson said: "Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the standards required."

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[Demolition company fined after worker struck by concrete panel](#)

A Demolition company has been fined after a worker suffered multiple injuries when he was struck by a concrete spandrel panel.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how Vale Park Demolition Services Limited was contracted to demolish a link bridge structure at Littleborough Primary School, Rochdale. On 29 October 2015, an employee of GT Scaffolding North

West Limited was struck by a concrete panel weighing approximately 500kg when he was removing scaffolding that was placed in front of the final part of the link bridge that was due to be demolished. He suffered from a broken right shoulder, five broken ribs, three fractures to the spine, a punctured lung and a broken left foot.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the work was not suitably planned and the stability of the panel was not appropriately considered when removing the scaffolding.

Vale Park Demolition Services Limited of Hazelbottom Road, Crumpsall, Manchester pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and have been fined £4,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,397.64.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector David Norton said "The incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards".

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4. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/demolition.htm>

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[9.5k fine for duo following fatal incident](#)

The partners of a Suffolk based farm have been sentenced after a haulage contractor was killed by an overhead power line strike.

Basildon Magistrates' Court heard how on 30 August 2016, Mr Christopher Wilson, a haulage driver, was killed when his tipping trailer was raised and made contact with overhead power lines that ran across part of the yard hard standing at the Airfield Grain store, Parham near Framlingham, Suffolk. The site was managed by Nicholas and Roger Watts, partners of F S Watts & Sons. Mr Wilson was electrocuted and died at the scene.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that F S Watts and Sons had failed to take suitable precautions for work near to the overhead electric power lines despite the recommendations given to them previously by NFU Mutual Risk Management Services (NFU RMS).

Mr Nicholas Watts and Mr Roger Watts each pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 3(1)(a) contrary to regulation 14, of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and each was fined 9,500 and ordered to pay costs of £4,700.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Saffron Turnell said:

““This tragic incident led to the avoidable death of a young father. This death could easily have been prevented if those in control of operations at the grain store had acted to identify and manage the risks involved and put a safe system of work in place.”

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