

# Bedding manufacturer fined after employees suffer serious injuries

A bedding manufacturer has been fined more than £250,000 after two of its employees were seriously injured during separate incidents at its site in Rochdale.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuted Sartex Quilts and Textiles Limited following the incidents, which saw both workers undergo amputations.

HSE inspector Elena Pickford described the injuries sustained by the workers as “serious and avoidable”.

The first incident took place on 29 March 2020 and involved a 32-year-old employee from Burnley. On his first day working on the line, he was instructed to clean the measuring wheel on a cutting machine. He climbed onto the conveyer belt, however the cutting machine had not been properly isolated from all sources of power and the machine’s clamp came down, trapping the employee’s left hand and causing the circular saw to move.



The cutting machine the employee was operating at the time of the incident

The saw was brought to a stop by another employee who pressed the emergency stop button. Unfortunately, this was not in time and resulted in the worker having three fingers amputated from his left hand.

The worker said in his victim personal statement: “Prior to this incident, I was a healthy, happy and active person. At the time I had one very young son, now I have two children. I try not to expose my left hand too much to my

children when I am playing with them or when they are in my company. I do not talk about the incident with my children. When I am out and about in public, I try to keep my injured hand out of the public view.”

On 22 October 2021, a second Sartex Quilts and Textiles employee was involved in an incident while operating a quilting machine. The 51-year-old, from Rochdale, had noticed a fallen casing and attempted to place it onto the back of the machine while it was being operated.

However, his gloves became tangled in the machine, causing his right hand to be dragged in. This caused lacerations and crush injuries to his right hand and resulted in the tips of two of his fingers to be amputated.



The quilting machine being used by the worker

HSE inspectors Leanne Ratcliffe and Elena Pickford investigated the incidents in 2020 and 2021 respectively and found Sartex Quilts and Textiles Limited did not guard the machinery and did not implement suitable and sufficient procedures to isolate machinery from power.

HSE guidance says machines should be properly switched off, isolated or locked off before taking any action to remove blockages, clean or make adjustments. Machines should also be fitted with fixed guards to enclose dangerous parts, whenever practical. The full guidance can be found here: [Equipment and machinery – HSE](#).

Sartex Quilts and Textiles Limited, of Castle Mill, Queensway, Rochdale, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Regulation 11 of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The company was fined £251,250 and ordered to pay £6,862.63 in costs at Manchester & Salford Magistrates’ Court on 14 February 2024.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Elena Pickford said: “These injuries were serious and avoidable, the risk should have been identified.

“Employers should make sure they properly assess and ensure that access to dangerous parts of machinery are prevented. Had these machines been adequately guarded and a safe isolating procedure been in place, these incidents could have easily been prevented.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Samantha Crockett

and supported by HSE paralegal officer Rebecca Forman.

**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.