

Builder sentenced after young worker seriously-injured

A builder from Cornwall has been sentenced after one of his employees sustained serious, life-changing hand injuries whilst operating a handheld circular saw.

Bodmin Magistrates' Court heard how David Avent, trading as David Avent Building Services, undertook a barn refurbishment in Callington during February 2017. On 7 February, a worker, who had recently turned 17, was using a circular saw to cut wooden flooring sheets when the blade made contact with his hand causing serious, life-changing injuries. The saw blade cut fully through his index finger, three quarters through his middle finger and half way through his ring finger.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found David Avent had no record of any information, instruction and training that he had provided to his employee in the safe use of the circular saw nor had he ensured that safe working practices were followed when cutting the flooring sheet. The investigation also found that circular saw blade had not been properly adjusted for the size of material being cut at the time of the incident and the flooring sheet was not appropriately supported whilst being cut.

David Avent of Callington, Cornwall pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and Regulation 3(4) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. He has been fined £1,120 and ordered to pay costs of £8489.48.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Dr Jo-Anne Michael said: "This injury was easily preventable and the risk associated with the task should have been identified."

"Employers should make sure they properly assess and apply effective control measures to minimise the risk from contact with dangerous parts of machinery to ensure that the risks are given careful attention to ensure they are properly controlled."

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. hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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