

# Company director sentenced after exposing employees to hazardous substances

A manufacturer of agricultural trailers has been sentenced for deliberately putting his workers at risk of developing severe lung disease, after exposing them to substances harmful to health.

Preston Crown Court heard that, over a period of time up to February 2018, James Harrison, former managing director of the now dissolved Laser Shapes (NW) Limited, exposed his employees to hazardous substances and deliberately hid unsafe working practices from HSE inspectors at the company's former site at Witton Mill, Blackburn.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that employees of Laser Shapes (NW) Limited regularly used aerosolised paints containing isocyanates and solvents to spray large tractor trailers. Breathing in products containing isocyanates and solvents can cause occupational asthma, dizziness, liver and kidney damage. However, this activity was being carried out without adequate controls in place to prevent workers from breathing in harmful substances.

Mr Harrison of Silsden, Keighley pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 37 and 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Mr Harrison was sentenced to 10 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months with 20 hours unpaid work, and ordered to pay costs of £5428.21.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Leona Cameron said "James Harrison was well aware of the unsafe conditions that his employees were being subjected to whilst at work.

"The effect of being exposed to these substances has resulted in at least one former employee developing a life changing condition, which could easily have been prevented if proper controls had been in place, such as suitable extraction and respiratory protective equipment."

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

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