

Company fined after causing a high-pressure gas leak near to the M73 and M8 motorway

John Murphy and Sons Ltd was sentenced for safety breaches after damaging a 10-inch gas pipeline whilst undertaking work to allow the widening of the M8 motorway.

Hamilton Sheriff Court heard that on 16 January 2014, during the course of the excavation works for the gas pipeline diversion, John Murphy and Sons Ltd hit the high pressure pipeline which was operating at 39 barg. This resulted in 271 tonnes of gas being released into the atmosphere in the vicinity of employees near the M73 junction.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the high pressure pipeline had been hit by an excavator during works for the gas pipeline diversion. J. Murphy and Sons Ltd, of Highgate Road, London, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 15 of The Pipelines Safety Regulations 1996 and Section 33(1) (c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £150,000.

After the hearing Hywel Williams, a HSE inspector specialising in pipelines, said: "This incident was totally avoidable and put workers at risk. The contractor failed to follow procedures and chose to conduct excavations in the vicinity of a high pressure pipeline by mechanical excavator instead of excavating by hand."

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](http://press.hse.gov.uk)

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