

Company fined after several workers contracted occupational disease

Construction company Peter Duffy Ltd was sentenced today for safety breaches after multiple employees were diagnosed with Hand Arm Vibration (HAVS).

Leeds Magistrates' Court heard that the company reported seven cases of HAVS between November 2016 and August 2018. All of the workers involved had been carrying out ground works involving vibrating tools. Many of them had been working in the industry for over 20 years.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that in 2016 the company contracted a new occupational health provider to replace their existing one. The diagnosis of the workers' conditions resulted from these changes. Prior to the new company taking over the contract, there was no suitable health surveillance in place to identify HAVS.

Peter Duffy Ltd of Park View, Lofthouse, Wakefield pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company has been fined £40,000 and ordered to pay £3,919 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Chris Tilley said: "The company should have undertaken a suitable and sufficient risk assessment to identify the level of vibration employees were exposed to throughout their working day and then put in place appropriate control measures.

"Furthermore, the company should have put in place suitable health surveillance to identify HAVS in their workforce"

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. Please see the link below to the page on HSE's website that is the best guide to doing it the right way: www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/hav/index

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