

Company fined after worker develops occupational asthma

A design and manufacturing company has been fined after an employee carrying out soldering works developed occupational asthma.

Basingstoke Magistrates' Court heard that when the employee joined the company in 1975 there was no extraction system in place. Approximately 15-20 years later the company introduced a small bench top air displacement box (ADB) as a fume extractor. Throughout his employment at the company, the worker was exposed to rosin-based solder flux fumes which led to the development of occupational asthma.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found there were inadequate control measures for soldering works because the ADB acted as a disperser rather than an extractor. Employees were therefore exposed to harmful fumes from rosin-based solder flux.

Bayham Limited of Rutherford Road, Daneshill Industrial Estate, Basingstoke, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 7 (1) Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (amended) Regulations 2002 and was fined £12,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6385.32.

Speaking after the hearing, Health and Safety Executive Inspector Karen Morris said: "The need for appropriate local exhaust ventilation and other control measures need to be in place for employees carrying out soldering work.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

For more information on working with solder fume visit:
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg248.pdf

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>