

Company fined after worker seriously injured when repairing machinery

A quarry operator has been fined after an employee had his hand and arm caught in a conveyor belt.

Lochmaddy Sherriff Court heard how, on 2 November 2016, employees of MacAulay Askernish Limited were undertaking maintenance work on the conveyor belt of a screener unit that was slipping at Askernish Quarry on the Isle of South Uist. One of the workers, Donald Campbell, was leaning through the opening in the conveyor frame when his hand was pulled into the nip point between the drive drum and conveyor belt. His arm quickly became entangled in the mechanism, causing severe injury, permanent disfigurement and impairment.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the guarding of the screener unit was not adequate. The investigation also found the company failed to have in place a suitable procedure for the isolation of the screener unit and to ensure the unit was maintained in good repair as other guard panels were not in place.

Macaulay Askernish Limited of Hillside Office, Lochboisdale, Isle of South Uist, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(1) of the Quarries Regulations 1999 and has been fined £30,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector, Mike Tetley said: "This injury was easily preventable and the risks from this type of equipment are well-known.

"Companies operating belt conveyors must ensure access has been prevented to dangerous parts and that guards are properly maintained. Having a secure isolation procedure in place is also an essential control when undertaking maintenance work."

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>

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