

# Company fined after worker seriously injures hand

A company has been fined after a worker's hand was pulled into a large drill causing serious injury.

The aircraft fitter, who worked for GE Aviation Systems Limited, was using the unguarded drill at the firm's former site on Kings Avenue, Hamble, Hampshire on 3 November 2019.

While using the drill on the frame of a small plane, the worker's left hand was caught by metal debris and then became entangled around the drill. The worker was only able to stop the drill by reaching with his free hand to detach the airline.

The worker sustained injuries to his left hand, including ligament and tendon damage as well as deep lacerations.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found GE Aviation Systems Limited, a manufacturer of components for commercial and military aircraft, had failed to provide a guard stopping workers from being exposed to the drill's rotating shaft. The company also failed to introduce an emergency stop system to halt the drill.

In a victim impact statement presented to the court, the worker said: "I have been left with disfigured fingers. They will never go straight again and will always be bent. I had my original wedding ring cut off after the accident as my fingers doubled in size due to the swelling. I now have to wear a resized ring due to injuries.



The worker's hand following the incident.

"The injury to my hand has affected my grip strength. I find it difficult sometimes to hold bottles and cans and I am unable to hold tools for long periods at work. I have to take regular breaks to give my hand a rest when previously I would have carried on through. I also find that my fingers stiffen up if I have to use tools for a prolonged time.

"I generally struggle with tasks where I have to grip anything for a prolonged period of time. This is all improving with time, but progress is slow. The accident knocked my confidence and I was hesitant about returning to that process. I found myself being overly cautious for a while until I was about to build my confidence back up.

"The injuries sustained in the accident continue to have an effect on my day-to-day life. I am learning to manage with it as I go along."

GE Aviation Systems Limited, of Cheltenham Road, Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham pleaded guilty to breaching Provision and Use of Work Equipment (PUWER) 1998 Regulations 8 (1), 11 (1) & 16 (1). The company was fined £76,000 and ordered to pay £10,525 in costs at West Hampshire Magistrates' Court on 25 January 2023.

HSE inspector Rebecca Lumb said: "The risk of entanglement around a rotating shaft is a known and well-documented machinery risk and yet wholly-preventable incidents on unguarded rotating machinery remain far too common. Employers should carry out assessment of machinery risks to ensure they are guarded appropriately to ensure that life-changing injuries, such as this, do not occur.

“The fitting of emergency stop devices (where appropriate) is a defined duty within PUWER 1998; in many instances, retro-fitting them to existing machinery is reasonably practicable for employers to ensure legacy equipment is safeguarded to current standards.

“Employers should also ensure that adequate information and instruction is provided to all who use work equipment, including full consideration of when it is appropriate to use personal 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.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.