

Company prosecuted after worker loses hand in lathe

A UK manufacturer of brick products, Ibstock Brick Ltd, has been fined for safety breaches after a worker's hand was entangled and wrapped around the rotating shaft on a lathe.

North Staffordshire Justice Centre heard how, on 28 February 2020, a maintenance engineer was in the process of polishing a metal shaft as it rotated in a manual lathe, using an emery cloth directly by hand and whilst wearing gloves. The emery cloth became entangled around the rotating shaft and dragged the engineer into the lathe resulting in his hand being severed in the machine. The engineer subsequently underwent surgical amputation below the elbow.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that there were failures in the arrangements and controls for the task performed. The risk assessment in place was not suitable and sufficient in that it did not properly assess or address entanglement risk associated with the direct manual application of emery cloth to the workpiece or the use of gloves. There was inadequate training, instructions and supervision to ensure that the risks from entanglement with gloves or the emery cloth were prevented.

Ibstock Brick Ltd of Audley Road, Newcastle under Lyme pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety Act 1974 and have been fined £530,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,548.20

After the hearing, HSE inspector Marie-Louise Riley-Roberts said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to assess risk and devise safe methods of working in which their employees should then be instructed and trained. If Ibstock Brick Ltd had, had effective managerial arrangements in place for the task undertaken and ensured their employees were following a safe system of work, based upon risk assessment, safe systems of work, supervision, information, instruction and training, then the life changing injuries sustained by this worker could have been prevented.

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

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>
4. Guidance on the use of emery cloth is available at [EIS2: The use of emery cloth on metalworking lathes \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk/EIS2/The_use_of_emery_cloth_on_metalworking_lathes)