

Company sentenced after worker injured by unguarded machinery

A company that manufactures absorbent products has been fined after an agency worker suffered a life-changing injury to her hand when it was caught in a rotating fan blade.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how, on 18th October 2017, the 34-year-old agency worker had been working her second shift at the NPS Worldwide UK Limited site at Oldham. While removing a blockage inside the filling machine she had been operating, her fingers became caught in an unguarded rotating fan. The agency worker lost parts of all of her fingers on her right hand, sustained extensive scarring to her stomach following an unsuccessful attempt to generate new skin growth to save her fingers, and continues to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the incident and the injuries sustained.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the fan had not been suitably guarded, putting employees and agency workers at risk. The company had failed to carry out a suitable risk assessment and provide adequate information, instruction and training to workers. No first aid provision was available on the night shift when the incident occurred, and this contributed to the injured person suffering further as incorrect first aid was administered.

NPS Worldwide UK Limited of Vulcan Business Park, Derker Street, Oldham, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Regulation 3(2) of the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981. The company was fined £28,000 and ordered to pay costs of £7,771.

HSE inspector Sharon Butler said after the hearing: "This injury could have easily been prevented and the risk should have been identified.

"Employers must make sure they properly assess and apply effective control measures to minimise the risk from dangerous parts of machinery."

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. More information about machinery risks can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/textiles/machinery/fibre-preparation.htm>

4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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