

Construction company fined after worker suffered life changing injuries

Hovington Limited was sentenced today for safety breaches after a worker was struck by a falling piece of plant machinery while working on a construction site in Rotherham.

Sheffield Magistrates' Court heard that, on 4 February 2019, groundworkers, including the injured person, were breaking out ground using a 13 tonne 360 excavator with a hydraulic breaker attached to an automatic quick hitch, as part of trench work to install new drainage of the site at Arconic Forging and Extrusions, Sheffield Road, Ickles, Rotherham. The breaker became detached from the quick hitch on the excavator. The breaker fell, narrowly missing one ground worker, and landed on the injured worker's right foot. He sustained injuries which led to amputation of his right leg below the knee.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company failed to ensure that a safe method of work was in place when working in the vicinity of an excavator, there was no defined segregation between people and plant, and no use of a vehicle plant marshal to ensure the machine was isolated before pedestrians enter the working zone of the excavator. The company also failed to implement a dedicated bucket changing area for the changing of attachments to minimise the risk of attachments falling onto pedestrians.

Hovington Limited of Chichester Street, Rochdale pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company has been fined £34,000 and ordered to pay £1,935.84 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Trisha Elvy commented: "This incident could have easily resulted in a fatality and could have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"There should be suitable, defined safe systems of work so that persons who need to work in close proximity to excavators can do so safely."

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](https://www.hse.gov.uk)^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/)^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>^[3]

4. Please see the link below to the page on HSE's website that is the best guide to doing it the right way:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/excavators.htm>

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