

Council fined as school technician loses finger

A local authority has been sentenced after a worker lost his finger while operating a machine.

Adi Soday, a technician at The Forest School in Horsham, lost his right index finger when it was sliced off by a circular bench saw on 13 June 2022.

The 29-year-old, who worked in the design and technology (DT) department, had been operating the saw to cut pieces of wood that were set to be used for a DT lesson.

While pushing one of the sheets of wood through the saw, Mr Soday, who was 27 at the time, felt a pain in his right index finger and immediately turned off the machine.

As he looked down, he saw his finger lying on the bench.



The machine being operated by Mr Soday

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found West Sussex County Council, the local authority in charge of the school, failed to ensure Mr Soday was trained to use the bench circular saw. Mr Soday had used the saw many times but had not been trained on how to use it safely.

West Sussex County Council pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 9 of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The local authority was fined £16,000, ordered to pay £4,294.60 in costs and a victim surcharge of £190 at Brighton Magistrates' Court on 3 July 2024.

HSE inspector Russell Beckett said: “Workers must be trained properly when using high risk woodworking such as bench circular saws. This incident could have been prevented had West Sussex County Council provided Mr Soday with proper training.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Iain Jordan and supported by HSE paralegal officer Imogen Isaac.

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.