

Directors fined for unlicensed asbestos removal

The managing director and the director of a printing company, have been fined for safety breaches after organising the removal of asbestos insulation board by untrained personnel.

Leeds Magistrates' Court heard how, between August 2016 and December 2016, Charles Dunn and Jeremy Mills, respectively the managing director and director of D&M Heritage Limited, consented to work taking place at the company's premises which failed to use adequate measures to prevent the spread of asbestos.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company rented space in a warehouse at Red Doles Lane in Huddersfield and had been given notice to leave by the new owners. Prior to leaving, the company agreed to remove some free-standing cupboards. A licensed removal company, who had carried out work previously at the site, had told the directors of D&M Heritage Ltd that the rear of a cupboard was broken and was likely to be asbestos.

The cupboards comprised of doors made with asbestos insulation board (AIB) and the rear of the cupboards also contained AIB. The cupboards were broken up during removal, releasing asbestos fibres. Some pieces were placed in bags, others placed in a nearby skip.

Charles Dunn of Mill Lane, Mixenden, Halifax pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37 of the Health & Safety at Work Act (due to Reg 11 of Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012) and a second charge of breaching Section 37 of the Health & Safety at Work Act (due to Reg 16 of Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012). He was fined £916 and ordered to pay £5,000 in costs.

Jeremy Mills of Occupation Road, Linley, Huddersfield pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37 of the Health & Safety at Work Act (due to Reg 11 of Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012) and a second charge of breaching Section 37 of the Health & Safety at Work Act (due to Reg 16 of Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012). He was fined £1,600 and ordered to pay £10,000 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Yolande Burns-Sleightholme said: "Asbestos is a killer. Companies need to recognise the dangers of removing asbestos by themselves both to their employees and others. Asbestos removal should only be carried out by trained personnel who understand the risks and know how to control them."

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. www.hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk/>
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/asbestos>