

Drinks company fined after employee loses finger in bottling machinery

A drinks company has been fined £14,000 after a man's finger was amputated after being caught in bottling machinery.

Daniel Richardson, then 32, assisted a colleague who was encountering problems with a bottle capping machine at the plant in Wigston, Leicestershire on 17 January 2022.



Mr Richardson, from Leicester, was able to reach into the machine and into the capper unit to remove the jammed part at which point, the capper head descended onto his finger, amputating the tip.

Attempts were made at Leicester Royal Infirmary to re-attach the tip of the finger – this proved unsuccessful, and it was subsequently necessary to amputate his finger between the first and second knuckle.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Sourcing International Limited, trading as Drinks Chef failed to properly guard against access to dangerous parts of machinery – in this instance fixed guarding had been removed and the machine was frequently used without it.

Additionally, an interlock device which should function to isolate the power and stop the machine when protective doors / guards were opened elsewhere on the machine was inoperable and so access to moving parts of machinery was further possible.

HSE has guidance on [machinery safety](#) highlighting how employers should consider how their workers use machinery and how they should also have adequate maintenance arrangements in place to ensure it remains safe to use.

Sourcing International Limited t/a Drinks Chef, of Unit A1 Bowbridge Works, Chartwell Drive, Wigston, pleaded guilty to contravening a requirement of Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

The company was fined £14,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,175.79 at a hearing at Loughborough Magistrates Court on 24 April 2024.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Rebecca Gibson said: “This tragic incident highlights the duty on employers to ensure machinery, and other work equipment, is safe for use. Suitable guards would render dangerous parts of machinery inaccessible during normal use and would have avoided this serious injury to Mr Richardson.”

This prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Sam Crockett.

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.