

Farm equipment manufacturer fined after employee's arm pulled into lathe

A company has been fined after a worker was injured when his arm was pulled into a metalworking lathe.

Chelmsford Magistrates' Court heard how in January 2018, an employee was using emery cloth to hand-polish a workpiece, as it was being rotated on a Colchester Mascot 1600 manual lathe at the site in Woodbridge, Suffolk. The employee was wearing gloves when he got caught on the rotating chuck, causing his arm to be pulled into the machine. As a result, his arm became fractured in four places.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed that employees were not provided with the necessary training, information or instructions to carry out this work in a safe manner. There was no risk assessment, nor company policy on the dangers of using emery cloth or wearing gloves while operating a lathe. Furthermore, the lathe was in operation without an emergency stop fitted to the machine.

Richard Western Limited of Woodbridge, Suffolk, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company has been fined £50,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,717.19.

After the hearing HSE inspector Eleanor Kinman said: "This injury was easily preventable, and the risk should have been identified by the company. It was common practice to polish workpieces in the way the employee was doing, and to wear gloves whilst operating the lathes.

"Operatives and companies should be aware that emery cloth should never be applied directly by hand on a lathe, and that the wearing of gloves increases the risk of entanglement and is never acceptable near rotating parts of machinery. "Employers must properly assess and apply effective control measures to minimise the risk whilst operating 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. www.hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Guidance on how to do it safely can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/eis2.pdf>

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