

Fine for Kent timber firm after worker loses three fingers

A company has been fined after an employee had three fingers severed by a panel saw at work.

David Broadway, 36, had been working at Pemberton Timber Frame Limited, a company that manufactures timber frame structures for the construction industry, at its site in Evelyn Way in Ramsgate on the morning of 4 January 2023.

He was operating a panel saw and asked to cut down the thickness of a length of timber – known as a rip cut. This process involved passing a length of timber through the panel saw multiple times as the timber exceeded the depth the blade could cut in one pass.

CCTV footage shows Mr Broadway successfully completing the cut before flipping the length of timber over, but he soon found the second cut much more difficult. He can be seen attempting to feed the timber through the saw and while receiving it from the cut end, his right hand made contact with the saw blade, instantly amputating his index, middle and ring fingers, also cutting his little finger.



Mr Broadway had been operating a panel saw at the time of the incident

Mr Broadway said the accident has massively impacted in aspects of his life.

“I used to do weight lifting, ride my bike and keep active,” he said.

“I used to work a lot with my hands and I am now getting frustrated as I

can't do these things.

"Even normal activities like cooking or taking a shower are a challenge. It makes me feel stressed as I can't do the everyday activities I used to do."

Mr Broadway now also struggles to care for his children, including his young son, born after the accident.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that Mr Broadway was asked to complete a task that was not suitable for the machine he was using. Pemberton Timber Frame Ltd had also failed to ensure he received sufficient training or instruction on how to use the panel saw safely, which would have included vital information about the limitations of the saw, guarding and other safety features such as a riving knife and the use of a push stick. The saw riving knife was also absent at the time of the incident.

HSE has clear guidance on [safe woodworking](#) which includes how and when a rip cut is carried out – a panel saw with a circular blade must not be used unless the saw blade, at all times, projects through the upper surface of the material being cut.

The investigation also discovered that the company had appropriate machines to undertake this task safely but Mr Broadway was unaware of this due to his lack of training.

On 8 January 2025, Pemberton Timber Frame Ltd of The Strand, Walmer, Kent pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 at Sevenoaks Magistrates' court. The company was fined £12,000 order to pay full costs of £4,034.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE principal inspector Ross Carter said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers.

"If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, the life changing injuries sustained by Mr Broadway would not have happened."

The HSE investigation was conducted by HM inspector Simon Asakura-Cornish and the prosecution brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Samantha Wells, support by paralegal officer David Shore.

Notes to editors:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice

to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences in England and Wales can be found [here](#) and for those in Scotland [here](#).