

Food manufacturer fined following machinery incidents

A food manufacturer has been fined more than half a million pounds after three of its employees suffered serious injuries in separate incidents involving machinery.

David Wood Baking Ltd has been prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The incidents took place at between June and December 2022:

- On 25 June 2022, a woman's arm was drawn into a conveyor belt at the company's site at Lyon Road in Kearsley, Bolton. As a result, she suffered two open fractures and permanent nerve damage in the hand. She underwent three operations and the insertion of two metal plates to repair the damage.
- On 20 July 2022, a man working at the company's site in Sidney Street, Bolton, was injured after becoming trapped in a mechanical mixer. He was attempting a repair to the machine when the lid of the mixer dropped onto his left arm. Neither the supervisor or manager on call were contactable and the employee was stuck in the machine for around 90 minutes, eventually being freed by the fire brigade. The man suffered an open fracture to the arm as well as other fractures and nerve damage in the left forearm.
- On 4 December 2022, also at the Kearsley site, a woman had a finger severed after her hand became entangled in an unguarded drive belt on a machine that she was operating. She was also left with ongoing nerve damage to the hand.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard that the company had a history of poor machinery guarding practice, having previously been convicted and fined £858,000 following an incident in 2021, where a 26-year-old employee had to have his right arm surgically removed following an incident with a piece of machinery.

The HSE investigation into the 2022 incidents found the company failed to keep employees safe from risks posed by food manufacturing machinery, and that training was inadequate and monitoring insufficient to rectify issues.

The risk of injury is higher when machinery becomes unreliable and develops faults, or it is used improperly through inexperience or lack of training. HSE guidance is available [here](#).

David Wood Baking Limited of Calverley Road, Oulton, Leeds, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The company was fined £573,344 and was ordered to pay £12,288 costs at a hearing on 19 December 2024 at Manchester Magistrates' Court.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Jennifer French said:

“This company failed to keep employees safe from risks posed by food manufacturing machinery. The training was inadequate and the monitoring insufficient to rectify issues.

“It is important for industries to understand the potential dangers arising from the use of, or working near, dangerous machinery.

“HSE will always be prepared to use appropriate enforcement when companies fall short of their duties and responsibilities.”

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Iain Jordan.

Further information:

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](#).