

Food manufacturing company fined after worker severs finger

A company based in Newthorpe, Nottinghamshire, which manufactures meat, pasta, alcohol, oil and meatless foods, has been fined after an employee sustained a serious injury to his fingers.

Nottinghamshire Magistrate's Court heard how, on 29 September 2020, a worker's left middle, ring and little fingers were severed from his hand while he was feeding pasta into a pasta cutting machine.

The New Product Development Department of Giorgio's Continental Limited, (GCL) were trialling the production of a new shape of pasta. The trial involved the pasta being prepared to shape using a DL pasta cutting machine, followed by employees hand-rolling it into the finished product.

It was identified that the company's pasta machine was not compatible with the new shape of pasta because the existing die from the pasta machine would have partitioned the pasta – a process which was not required on the trial product.

Prior to the incident, the die was removed from the machine which then exposed the cutting blades. It was suggested that the company continued with the trial using a temporary guard, which was a sheet of metal taped to the machine.

When the trial began the employee who was subsequently injured, was seen working at the machine with the cutting blades exposed.

He was also observed feeding the pasta into the machine and at one point his fingers made contact with the exposed cutting blades causing the injury.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that GCL failed to ensure that effective measures were taken to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery as the guard was removed and the interlocking protection device was defeated. A product trial was initiated, but there was no assessment or planning at a management level on how the trial could be completed safely. Ensuring the proper guard remained in place would have prevented this accident.

Giorgio's Continental Limited of Dunsil Road, Moorgreen Business Park, Newthorpe, Nottingham pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 in that it failed to ensure that measures were taken which were effective to prevent access to a dangerous part of machinery. The company was fined £33,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1938.40.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Leigh Stanley said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices. Companies should be aware that HSE will

not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards.”

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