

Food processing company sentenced after worker suffers serious injuries

A company has been fined £20,000 after an employee's arm was drawn into machinery and seriously injured.

The worker, Piotr Zielinski, 58, from Nottinghamshire, was working for food processing company Belwood Foods Limited.

His right arm was drawn into a machine and wrist crushed while cleaning poultry processing machinery at Belwood Food's site at Lowmoor Business Park, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham, on 22 November 2019.

He had been removing debris that was trapped on the hinges of an open access panel door at the base of a hopper machine. The door had been opened to allow the debris to drain from the auger.



The access panel door at the base of the hopper

While removing the debris however, the auger was still in operation and caught the worker's right arm, drawing it into the machine up to the elbow.

This led to skin and muscle being removed from Mr Zielinski's right arm with his wrist also being crushed. His injuries required surgery.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the access panel door was able to be opened freely whilst the auger was in

motion. There were no controls in place to prevent the panel from being opened while the auger was moving. It was not locked or interlocked, and there was no safe isolation procedure for this weekly cleaning task.

HSE guidance can be found at: [Equipment and machinery – HSE](#)

Belwood Foods Limited, of The Henley Building, Newtown Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £7,839.21 in costs at Nottingham Magistrates' Court on 9 October 2023.

HSE inspector Lee Greatorex said: "This injury was easily preventable. Employers have a responsibility to properly assess the risks from all aspects of their operations, including cleaning and maintenance, and implement effective control measures to minimise the risk from dangerous parts of machinery. HSE will not hesitate to take action against companies which do not do all that they should to keep people safe."

This prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Samantha Wells.

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We seek to 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>