

Glazing company fined for failing to control risks of vibrating tools

A glass and glazing company which installs and repairs glass windscreens and side windows to buses, coaches, motor homes and trains, has been fined for failing to adequately control the risk to its employees from using vibrating tools.

Reading Magistrates' Court heard how employees of PSV Glass and Glazing Limited were required to use oscillating and reciprocating saws, known as Fein cutters, to remove the thick adhesive that had been used to secure the windows in place – sometimes for their entire shift. HSE received reports of 30 employees at the company being diagnosed with hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS).

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that on and before 20 August 2018, the company failed to adequately assess the risk to employees from exposure to vibration. They did not monitor the use of the Fein cutters and had not implemented measures to control exposure. There was no tool maintenance programme to ensure tools were working effectively to ensure vibration levels were kept to a minimum.

A large number of the 30 technicians affected are relatively young and have sustained life-changing permanent injury to their hands, which means they can no longer work with vibrating tools. Most now suffer constant pain and sensitivity to cold and struggle with everyday tasks.

PSV Glass and Glazing Limited of Hillbottom Road, High Wycombe pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 5(1), 6(1), 7(1) and 8(1) of The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005. The company has been fined £211,290.04 including a victim surcharge of £70 and ordered to pay costs of £11,120.04.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Emma Page said: "This was a case of the company completely failing to grasp the importance of HAVS health surveillance.

"If they had understood why health surveillance was necessary, it would have ensured that they had the right systems in place to monitor workers' health and the employees' condition would not have been allowed to develop to a severe and life altering stage."

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](https://www.hse.gov.uk)

2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. For more information on managing the risks of working with vibrating tools visit: hse.gov.uk/vibration/hav/index.htm
4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>