

Grimsby company fined £200,000 after driver suffers chemical burns

A company in Lincolnshire has been fined £200,000 after a driver suffered chemical burns to his feet assuming he was standing in a puddle of rainwater.

The man had been offloading his tanker with a delivery at the Laporte Road site of Tronox Pigment UK Limited, in Stallingborough, Grimsby, on 9 August 2022.

During the offloading process, he was standing in what he assumed to be a puddle of rainwater, due to the fact it had been raining throughout the day and the drains were blocked.

However, the driver was actually standing in a pool of water containing caustic, a corrosive chemical substance.

The subsequent burns led to him requiring skin grafts to the underside of both feet. The smallest toe on each of his feet were also amputated. He was unable to work for 12 weeks.

The pool of chemicals had leaked from the company's scrubber system and secondary containment. It ended up on the roadway after the site's sump pumps failed to pump the chemicals away.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation into this incident found Tronox Pigment UK Limited did not respond adequately to control the risk of a loss of containment after the site's sump pumps failed to work. The firm's failure to ensure the drains were kept clear also meant drivers did not recognise pools of standing liquid as a potential risk.

HSE guidance can be found at: [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Tronox Pigment UK Limited of Laporte Road, Stallingborough, Grimsby, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) and Section 33(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay £7,500 in costs at Grimsby Magistrates' Court on 15 September 2023.

HSE inspector Angus Robbins commented: "This was a disturbing incident, given that an innocent worker was suffering severe burns without, at first, realising. Other delivery drivers visiting the area could also have been put at risk.

"The incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"The importance of having adequate maintenance procedures and arrangements to respond to equipment failures, including assessing the risks arising from such failures, is essential."

This HSE prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Samantha Crockett and paralegal officer Kirsty Crapper.

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.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.