

Joinery firm fined for health and safety failings

A joinery firm in south east London has been fined £14,000 for health and safety failings, including putting its workers at risk of exposure to wood dust.

Sidcup-based DLD Joinery Limited was inspected by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in May 2022 as part of the workplace regulator's Dust Kills campaign, which targets woodworking businesses due to the significant health risks associated with wood dust.

During the inspection at the firm's site on Powerscroft Road, Footscray, the HSE inspector identified multiple failings related to control of exposure to wood dust, including excessive levels of settled dust around the site, as well as unguarded woodworking machinery and unclean toilets.





Some of the company's local exhaust ventilation (LEV) systems, which are used to extract wood dust at source during machining of wood, were damaged, and the arrangements to clean up residual wood dust not captured by these systems were ineffective.

The company had also failed to carry out repairs to its LEV systems recommended by external examiners four years previously to ensure they would extract wood dust more effectively. In addition, the employee toilets were extremely dirty and there was no system in place to ensure they were regularly cleaned. The company had been served with enforcement notices relating to its control of exposure to wood dust on two previous occasions, in 2009 and 2014.

Following the inspection in May 2022, the company was served with four Improvement Notices by HSE. However, the firm failed to comply with two of these notices, which related to face-fit testing for respiratory protective equipment and health surveillance for occupation asthma, by the deadlines set by the inspector.

Due to the number of issues identified, HSE opened an investigation into the company's failure to comply with Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, as well as its failure to comply with the Improvement Notices.

HSE has guidance on working in the [woodworking industry](#) and is running the [Dust Kills: Wood Dust campaign page](#), which provides free advice to businesses and workers on the control measures required to prevent exposure

to dust.

DLD Joinery Limited, of Powerscroft Road, Footscray, Sidcup, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, as well as failing to comply with two Improvement Notices. The company was fined £14,000 and ordered to pay £5,092.62 in costs at the City of London Magistrates' Court on 14 December 2023.

HSE inspector Gordon Carson said: "This case sends out a clear message to the industry that HSE will prosecute when inspectors find serious health and safety failings, particularly when previous enforcement and advice has been provided.

"Exposure to wood dust causes various occupational lung diseases which can significantly affect the quality of people's lives, and in some cases result in premature death. HSE continues to target the woodworking industry and strongly urges businesses to consult its website for further information to ensure that control of exposure is managed, and their statutory duties are complied with."

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.