

London joinery firm fined £20,000 for failing to control wood dust

A joinery firm in South East London has been fined £20,000 for failing to control its employees' exposure to wood dust.

F&E Joinery Limited, in Herne Hill, was inspected in May 2022 as part of a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) campaign targeting woodworking businesses due to the significant health risks associated with [exposure to wood dust](#), including the risk of developing occupational asthma. During the visit the inspector identified multiple failings related to control of exposure to wood dust, including excessive levels of settled dust around the site (shown in the images below).



The inspection was carried out in May 2022

The inspection found some of the company's machines had been disconnected from the local exhaust ventilation (LEV) system, which is used to extract wood dust at source during machining of wood. There was no way to connect other machines to the system. LEV significantly reduces the amount of wood dust that becomes airborne and inhaled when machined. There was also no evidence that settled wood dust was being cleaned up.

The company had been served with an enforcement notice relating to their control of wood dust on two previous occasions spanning over ten years.

On 21 April 2023, at Westminster Magistrates' Court, F & E Joinery Limited pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 7(1) of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (as amended) Regulations 2002 and was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,500.



The firm had already been served two enforcement notices over a ten-year period

HSE inspector Marcus Pope 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.
4. Further information about control of [exposure to wood dust](#) is available.