

Major pizza maker fined £800,000 after two workers caught up in machinery

One of the nation's largest producers of supermarket pizzas has been fined £800,000 after two workers suffered serious injuries at its factory in Bolton.

Stateside Foods Limited produces millions of pizzas each year, supplied to major UK supermarkets. The company was hit with the fine after the employees were caught up in machinery at the Westhoughton site in two separate incidents during 2020.

Bolton Crown Court heard how one man had his arm drawn into an inadequately guarded conveyor belt at the Lancaster Way factory, on 8 January 2020. The injury to his arm resulted in the removal of muscle and required a skin graft. He has not returned to work since the injury and has been diagnosed with hypersensitivity in the affected arm.



Stateside Foods produce millions of pizzas each year

Following on from this, on a night shift just nine months later, father of two Andrew Holloway had part of his middle finger severed after his hand was drawn between a roller and a conveyor belt on 14 October 2020. The acting team leader had been told of an issue on the production line and gone to investigate when the horrific incident happened.

“My right hand was drawn into the roller on the machine and when I pulled my hand out my fingers were hanging off,” he said.

“I was taken to hospital and was in and out of consciousness due to the shock and pain I was suffering.

“The pain was unbearable after the initial shock wore off; I have never experienced pain this bad in my life before.

“After I woke from the first operation, the surgeon informed me that he could not save my middle finger and had to remove the top section. They managed to save my ring finger by inserting a wire into it.”

Mr Holloway required a second operation to remove more of his middle finger as the tissue had not healed properly.

“I was unable to care for my three-year-old son after the accident as I couldn’t even get myself dressed let alone a three-year-old,” he added.

“I suffer with pain every day due to the accident; my fingers are stiff and very sensitive; every winter is unbearable due to the cold.

“My favourite hobby used to be Art, which I really enjoyed, but I cannot do this for more than five minutes now. Even simple things, like holding a knife and fork when eating can be difficult.

“This has been the worst period of my life by far, not only have I suffered but so have my family.”



Andrew Holloway had part of his middle finger severed after his hand was drawn between a roller and a conveyor

Although Mr Holloway returned to work after a six-month absence he left after just a couple of days – which resulted in him starting his career again.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company did not adequately guard their machinery, did not provide suitable and sufficient checks to ensure that their protective measures were working effectively, and allowed the disabling of guarding systems and access to dangerous parts of machinery.

Stateside Foods Limited of Lancaster Way, Westhoughton, Bolton, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) and 3 (1), of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act. The company was fined £800,000 and was ordered to pay £5,340 costs at a hearing on 15 March 2024 at Bolton Crown Court. The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyers Sam Crockett and supported supported by senior paralegal officer Stephen Parkinson.



The company was fined after two employees sustained injuries in 2020

After the hearing, HSE inspector Leanne Ratcliffe said: “This is one of the country’s major food companies.

“The injuries sustained by both of these workers has been truly life changing.

“This case should send a message to industry about how important it is understand the risks of bypassing guarding arrangements, and to re-evaluate their own guarding arrangements and procedures to eliminate any access to dangerous parts of machinery.

“We will always be prepared to take action when companies fall short of their duties and responsibilities to protect their staff.”

HSE Enforcement Lawyer Kate Harney presented the case at Bolton Crown Court.

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. Guidance on [working safely with machinery](#) is available.