

Manufacturer fined after workers exposed to asbestos

A machining manufacturer has been fined after workers were exposed to asbestos fibres whilst demolishing an internal wall.

Birmingham Magistrates' Court heard how the workers were asked to remove the internal wall by their manager. There was no asbestos survey or an up to date asbestos management plan for the premises.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that asbestos insulation sheets were removed unsafely without proper precautions and by unlicensed individuals from the company without any safeguards in place to prevent the spread of the asbestos fibres.

Birmingham Specialities Ltd of Moor Lane, Birmingham pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company has been fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,454.40.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Tariq Khan said: "Asbestos in buildings needs to be managed or removed by competent contractors. Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of working. The company needed to follow the proper procedures by carrying out an asbestos survey and formulating an asbestos management plan as well as training those responsible for managing asbestos".

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We seek to 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
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Further information about managing asbestos in premises can be found at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/hsg227.pdf>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.