

Manufacturing company fined after workers exposed to asbestos

Power Link Machines (UK) Ltd was sentenced for safety breaches after the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was informed the company was using gaskets within its generator sets that contained asbestos.

Analysis by HSE's Science Division confirmed the gaskets contained asbestos. The company was served with a Prohibition Notice on 26 March 2018 requiring them to stop the use of these gaskets and ensure that they did not import any asbestos containing items.



Leeds Magistrates' Court heard that a second concern was received on 21 September 2018 stating that employees were being asked to work on a generator set, which contained gaskets which looked very similar to those found to contain asbestos earlier in the year. This unit had been imported from Power Link Machine (Shanghai) Co Ltd.

An investigation by HSE found that these gaskets also contained asbestos and as the generator set had been imported into this country, the company had breached the Prohibition Notice served in March 2018. The company subsequently allowed an untrained employee to remove these gaskets releasing asbestos fibres into the generator set and then asking two other employees to work within that generator set, exposing them to asbestos fibres.

Power Link Machines (UK) Ltd of Vickers Building, Hurricane Close, Sherburn in Elmet pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and breaching Regulation 9 (1) and Schedule 6, part 2, section 2 of the REACH enforcement regulations 2008. The company was fined £22,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,062.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Rachel Brittain said: "When materials that contain asbestos are disturbed or damaged, fibres are released

into the air. When these fibres are inhaled, they can cause serious diseases.

“Had the company put robust checks in place to ensure that they were not importing asbestos containing materials, this incident would not have occurred.”

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. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/)^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>^[3]
4. Please see the link below to the page on HSE’s website that is the best guide to doing it the right way:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/dangerous.htm>

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