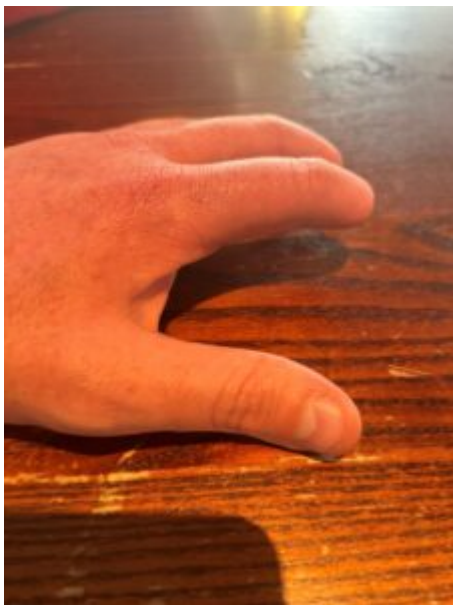


# McCain Foods fined after employee loses fingers

A frozen food company has been fined £700,000 after an employee lost two of his fingers following an incident at the firm's premises in Lincolnshire.

Tom Matthews, from Grantham, now champions health and safety in his current job at a different company, warning others to avoid his misfortune.

He had been working a night shift at McCain Foods' site in Easton on 2 September 2019 when he suffered serious injuries to his left hand.



Tom Matthews' left hand

While cleaning the company's batter system machinery, the 33-year-old had attempted to remove string dangling from a chute when his left hand was drawn in and contacted the machine's rotary valve.

The index and middle finger were later amputated as a result of the incident.

Tom Matthews, a father-of-two said: "The last four years have been hard and an ongoing struggle both physically and mentally.

"I still have circulation problems in my left hand following the incident that should never have happened.

"While I'm currently working, my new role is with the health and safety team at a different company as I want to use my story as an example to others and make sure something like this doesn't happen again."

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that McCain Foods had failed to provide appropriate guarding to prevent access to the dangerous parts of machinery, namely the rotary valve. It had not conducted an adequate risk assessment of the batter machine and had not provided employees with

adequate health and safety training or supervision.

HSE guidance can be found at: [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/laws/PUWER.htm)

McCain Foods (G.B.) Limited, of Havers Hill, Eastfield, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Section 11(1) of Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER). The company was fined £700,000 and ordered to pay £6,508.51 in costs at Lincoln Magistrates' Court on 22 November 2023.

HSE inspector Muir Finlay said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided had the company taken simple steps to guard dangerous parts of machinery and provide employees with suitable training and supervision.

"Companies and individuals should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

This prosecution was led by HSE enforcement lawyer Jonathan Bambro and supported by Rubina Abdul-Karim.

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The [Health and Safety Executive](https://www.hse.gov.uk/) (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.