

Mining company fined after electricians sustain burns

A mining company has been fined after two electricians suffered severe burns in separate incidents.

The owners of Boulby Mine in Saltburn-by-the-Sea were fined £3.6 million and ordered to pay costs of £185,000 after an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Cleveland Potash Limited (CPL) own the mine, which extracts organic fertiliser known as Polyhalite. Teesside Crown Court heard that on the 3 August 2016 a contract electrician received serious burns from an 11,000-volt electrical system. He unknowingly had placed a vacuum cleaner nozzle into a live electrical chamber. He had to be air lifted to Newcastle hospital specialist burns unit, where he was placed in an induced coma for 10 days.

On the 12 February 2019, another electrical contractor made contact with a live conductor on a 415-volt electrical system during electrical testing works, and received serious burns. He was hospitalised for six days.

The HSE found deficiencies from the owner of the mine in risk assessment, planning of works, and shortfalls in providing warnings about which parts of the electrical systems the two electricians were working on remained live.

Cleveland Potash Limited (CPL) of Boulby Mine, Loftus, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Cleveland pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) and two counts of Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

HSE specialist regulatory principal inspector Paul Bradley said: "These serious electrical incidents were easily preventable. CPL should have had a heightened awareness of electrical risks following the first incident in 2016, however failures to apply learnings and to adequately control risks resulted in the 2019 incident".

"Employers should make sure they properly assess and apply effective control measures to minimise risks when working on electrical systems. Both these incidents were preventable if long established electrical safety practices been applied."

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. www.hse.gov.uk

2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Guidance on the issues raised in this case can be found here:

[Electrical safety in mines \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk/electrical-safety-in-mines)

[Electricity at work: Safe working practices \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk/electricity-at-work-safe-working-practices)

[The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 – HSR25 \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk/electricity-at-work-regulations-1989)