

Motorsport engineering firm fined for failing to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees

A motorsport engineering firm based in Kent has been fined after Britain's workplace regulator identified numerous health and safety breaches.

Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited Hispec Motorsport Limited at its Dartford premises four times between February 2017 and July 2023.

The company – a specialist designer and producer of aftermarket brake upgrades for road, race, track, and kit cars – had failed to maintain work equipment and done little to prevent workers being exposed to metal-working mists that can cause asthma.

- HSE recently completed a successful campaign to [highlight the dangers from metalworking fluids](#). Exposure to metalworking fluids – also referred to as 'white water' – can cause harm to lungs and skin through inhalation or direct contact with unprotected skin; particularly the hands, forearms and face.

The HSE inspections took place in February 2017, November 2021, April 2023 and July 2023. They found serious breaches of the law at each visit and enforcement notices were issued.



High voltage panel removed while machine in operation

The subsequent investigation found the business had not maintained work equipment and staff were seen operating Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines with safety panels removed allowing access to dangerous moving parts. In addition, the company had done little to prevent employees from being exposed to water-mix metal working fluid mist, a known cause of Occupational Asthma and Occupational Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis.

Hispec Motorsport Limited, of Watling Street, Dartford, Kent, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of The Health and Safety At Work Etc Act 1974. The company was fined £6,500 and ordered to pay costs of £7,378 and a victim surcharge of £2,000 at Westminster Magistrates' Court on 3 May 2024.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Sam Brown commented: "Our inspections identified multiple failings by this company to manage key risks associated with work undertaken in the engineering industry."



Acids being stored at a high level

“Employees were using unguarded machinery and being exposed to hazardous substances that can cause debilitating respiratory diseases. Numerous interventions by our inspectors revealed a consistent failure to meet the minimum legal standards.

“This prosecution demonstrates that we will not wait for an injury or ill-health to occur before prosecuting.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Iain Jordan and supported by HSE paralegal officer, Imogen Isaac.

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. Helpful [guidance about metalworking fluids](#) is available