

Oil company fined £1.2m after two workers suffer multiple burn injuries

Oil refinery company, Phillips 66 Ltd was sentenced for safety breaches after two workers in North Lincolnshire suffered life-changing injuries from an uncontrolled release of high pressure and high temperature steam.

Grimsby Crown Court heard that on 30 October 2013, the two workers – one an employee of Phillips 66 Limited, the other an apprentice – were re-assembling high pressure steam pipework following maintenance of a steam turbine driven pump. During the process, they were exposed to an uncontrolled release of high pressure, high temperature steam of around 250°C. The uncontrolled release resulted in the 53-year-old employee receiving burns to his lower back and legs, and the 20-year-old apprentice receiving extremely serious burns to his torso, chest, arms and legs. At the time of the incident, these injuries were life threatening.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found a series of failures with Phillips 66 Limited's 'safe system of work procedure' which the workers adhered to. A number of personnel involved in the implementation of the company's safe isolation procedure of the steam system had failed to complete all the required checks and verifications to reduce the associated risks.

Phillips 66 Ltd of Aldergate Street, London pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company has been fined £1.2 million and ordered to pay £20,450.05 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector, Jarrod King commented: "Safe systems of work procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of workers. Companies should ensure that all relevant employees and personnel who are involved in their operation and execution are suitably trained and competent to complete their roles within the system.

"Where a significant risk gap leads to an incident which results in injury to workers, HSE will take the appropriate enforcement action irrespective of the size of the organisation."

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^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>^[3]

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