

Plastics manufacturer fined after a worker became entangled in unguarded machinery

Printed plastics manufacturer Alfaplas Limited has been fined after a worker became unconscious as a result of asphyxiation when his tabard was entangled in the rotating spindle of a print machine.

Kidderminster Magistrates' Court heard how on 29 January 2019, an employee who was a supervisor at Alfaplas Limited in Hereford, attempted to realign a reel of product on a print machine whilst it was running at half speed. The employee's high visibility tabard became entangled in an unguarded rotating spindle, drawing in his clothing. He became unconscious as a result of asphyxiation from the entangled clothing. An operator on an adjacent machine intervened to stop the print machine.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company failed to prevent access to the dangerous parts of machinery or stop dangerous parts before access was gained. They later fitted electro sensitive protection devices, which stopped the machine when the roller was active in the operator zone and the light beam was broken.

Alfaplas Limited of Ramsden Road, Rotherwas Industrial Estate, Hereford pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and Regulation 3(1) of the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999. They were fined £150,000 and ordered to pay costs of £14,379.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Sara Lumley said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply ensuring that dangerous parts of machinery were guarded.

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

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: www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

4. For more information on working safely with machinery, please visit our website here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/index.htm>

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