

# Rotherham company fined after worker suffered chemical burns

Granville Oil & Chemical Company Ltd has been sentenced for safety breaches after a worker suffered chemical burns to both arms and one leg.

Sheffield Magistrates' Court heard that on 27 September 2016, a worker was involved in a spillage incident when tasked with making engine degreaser at plant in Rotherham. The water-based product is made by blending Ultra-Concentrate with water.

The worker used a forklift truck to lift a container carrying 1,000 litres of Ultra-Concentrate in order to decant 250 litres of concentrate into three containers on the ground, each of which contained 750 litres of water. The company had specifically manufactured a rigid metal pipe to transfer the concentrate from one container to another. As he drove the forklift truck into position, the forks of the truck suddenly dropped one or two feet. This caused the metal transfer pipe to hit the ground and break. Ultra-Concentrate began to cascade out of the container. Having exited the cab of the forklift truck, the worker put his hand over the damaged valve to try and stem the flow. A large pool of concentrate had already formed on the ground and stood in it to reach the valve. The worker suffered chemical burns to both arms and one leg which required hospital treatment.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the worker had no eye protection and his clothes were soaked in Ultra-Concentrate. He wore only safety boots, a high visibility waist coat and a pair of latex gloves. HSE found that there was no drench shower on site and workers were given no assistance or instructions to change from clothing or wash properly in the event of contact with harmful substances.

Granville Oil & Chemical Company Ltd of Goldthorpe Industrial estate Rotherham South Yorkshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay £9,928.60 in costs.

After the hearing HSE inspector, David Coackley, commented: "The company had no systems in place for dealing with spillages and was not properly equipped to deal with the consequences of employees being contaminated with substances which might be harmful to their health.

"This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices."

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

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