

Sole trader fined following workers' exposure to hazardous substance

A Lincolnshire-based sole trader has been fined after his employees were exposed to a hazardous substance.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuted Chris Buckley, trading as The Furniture Chest, after the workplace regulator inspected the firm's site on Station Road, Heckington, Lincolnshire, on 7 April 2022.

HSE inspectors found a significant build-up of wood dust and that Local Exhaust Ventilation systems, provided to capture wood dust and protect employees, had not been thoroughly examined and tested.

A subsequent HSE investigation found Chris Buckley had failed to prevent or adequately control employees' exposure to wood dust and had failed to ensure that Local Exhaust Ventilation systems had been thoroughly examined and tested. Improvement Notices had been served in relation to the control of wood dust at previous inspections.





Wood dust is a hazardous substance and exposure can lead to workers suffering from respiratory diseases such as asthma and sino-nasal cancer.

HSE has guidance on working in the [woodworking industry](#) and is running the [Dust Kills: Wood Dust campaign page](#), which provides free advice to businesses and workers on the control measures required to prevent exposure to dust.

Chris Buckley of Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 7(1) and 9(2) of the Control of Substances Hazardous to

Health Regulations 2002. He was fined £1,354 and ordered to pay costs of £3,578 at Boston Magistrates' Court on 9 October 2023.

HSE inspector Muir Finlay said: "Chris Buckley could have ensured that his Local Exhaust Ventilation systems were thoroughly examined and tested to ensure that they were working to protect the health of employees. A suitable and sufficient cleaning regime could have been implemented to further reduce the build-up of dust.



"HSE recognises wood dust can cause serious health problems and launched its

[Dust Kills campaign](#) to help businesses to take action now to protect their workers' respiratory health.”

This HSE prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Rebecca Schwartz.

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