

# Chemical company fined after worker suffered burns

Robert McBride Ltd was sentenced today for safety breaches after a 31-year-old worker suffered 13 per cent superficial burns to his right arm and hand following the ignition of flammable vapours at the company's site in Hull.

Beverley Magistrates' Court heard that on 21 August 2017, a batch of hairspray was being mixed in a 10,000 litre stainless steel mixing vessel. Flammable vapours were created within the mixing vessel as a result of heating.

Ethanol was pumped directly into the vessel via pipework from an external storage tank. Other constituents (liquid and powder) were added to the vessel via a manway lid on the top of the vessel. The mixing process then required the addition of heat via an integral steam coil within the vessel.

As the worker was adding powders into the vessel via the lid using a metal scoop, flammable vapours leaving the vessel via the lid ignited, briefly engulfing his upper torso.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found there was an extraction system at the lip of the manway lid to remove vapours from this area, but it was not adequate to prevent a build-up of a flammable atmosphere. The ignition source is likely to have been a spark from the metal scoop, or static electricity build up on the workers clothing.

Robert McBride Ltd of Hornscliff Park, Kinswood, Hull pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(1) of the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002. The company was fined £480,000 and ordered to pay costs of £13,441.80.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector David Stewart said: "Dutyholders should carry out a DSEAR risk assessment in areas where there is a potential for the creation of explosive or flammable atmospheres in order to identify adequate control measures."

## 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>
4. Please see the link below to the page on HSE's website that is the best guide to doing it the right way:

[DSEAR Regulations – Fire and explosion \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk)

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## [HSE issues MOD with Crown Censure following severe injuries to employee](#)

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has been issued with a Crown Censure by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after an employee was shot during a training exercise.

In January 2019 an employee of the Ministry of Defence suffered severe injuries as a result of being shot with live ammunition during a training exercise where blank ammunition should have been used. This put both employees and persons not in the employment of Ministry of Defence, at risk.

The incident has had severe life changing consequences for the injured employee. Following their medical discharge, they suffered from PTSD and following the incident had difficulty performing routine tasks such as getting dressed, cooking cleaning and driving. .

By accepting the Crown Censure, the MoD admitted breaching its duty under Section 2(1) and Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 in that they failed to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees, and persons not in their employment, particularly in relation to the risks associated with training exercises.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Stacey Gamwell said: “ This was a very serious incident which could have easily resulted in death. Just like any other employer, the MoD has a responsibility to reduce risk to its employees and others who may be affected by its work.

“We recognise military training can be hazardous – but where work of this

nature is to be done, that danger should be controlled as much as reasonably practicable.

“An objective of military training is to prepare personnel for potential hazardous situations, but this does not mean the training itself should expose trainees to uncontrolled or inadequately controlled hazards.

“An employer must take all reasonably practicable steps to control the risk to the safety of employees whilst they are at work and others who may be affected by that work. They can do this through suitable and sufficient risk assessment and safe systems of work.”

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## [Two contractors sentenced after cable strike at substation](#)

A principal contractor and subcontractor have been fined after an employee's retina was damaged by an explosion caused by a cable strike during construction works at a substation.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how VolkerInfra Ltd, a high voltage cabling contractor, had been subcontracted by principal contractor Siemens Energy Ltd to carry out cabling works as part of a wider construction project at Whitegate Substation in Chadderton, Manchester.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019, an employee of VolkerInfra Ltd, who was excavating phases for laying a 275kV cable, struck an existing live cable close by with the excavator. The contact resulted in multiple explosions which caused blistering to the driver's retina.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the permit to dig had not been properly completed by Siemens Energy. It was also found neither they, nor the subcontractors had checked the cable markings prior to work commencing. The existing live cable had not been adequately identified and so the markings for the cable location were incorrect by around 50cm. It was also found there had been inadequate monitoring and supervision of work.

Siemens Energy Ltd of Faraday House, Sir William Siemens Square, Camberley, Surrey pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 and Section 3 (1) Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 was fined £900,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,327.52.

Volkerinfra Ltd of Hertford House, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire pleaded guilty to

breaches of Section 3 (1) Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £180,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,430.72.

HSE Inspector Rebecca Vaudrey said after the hearing: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of working."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at:

[Avoiding danger from underground services – HSG47 \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk/hsg47)

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

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## [Hospitality venues urged to arrange checks for outdoor installations ahead of busy period](#)

Pubs, restaurants and other hospitality venues are being urged to make sure electrical installations and electrical equipment for use in outdoor spaces are safe as they enter the spring and summer season.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is working with both representatives from the hospitality industry and local authority enforcement officers to increase awareness and to improve safety standards.

HSE is stressing that venues should arrange for a competent person to carry out electrical installation work, only using lights and heaters specifically designed for outdoor use, and regularly checking equipment for damage or water ingress. The fixed installation and electrical appliances should be inspected, tested and maintained in accordance with the [Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#).

John Rowe, HSE's Head of Operational Strategy said: "The hospitality sector will be looking forward to an exciting and busy period, as it prepares for the spring and summer seasons, which will include major events such as the Commonwealth Games and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Those responsible for outdoor spaces will be planning to make use of them. It is important to make sure electrical equipment is in good condition, particularly as it may have been unused and in storage for a long period of time."

The information below is for the installation and use of plug-in electrical equipment. Anyone selecting, using or maintaining such equipment should be competent to do so.

#### **Before installing any outdoor equipment:**

- Consider using extra low voltage or solar equipment to provide a safer installation
- Only select equipment that is suitable for outdoor use
- Check that equipment is not damaged particularly if it has been stored from previous use.
- Ensure that the existing electrical installation is in good condition and compatible with the equipment to be installed. This will include being able to accommodate the electrical load so that circuits and sockets are not overloaded
- Ensure that equipment is only connected to a socket protected by a suitable RCD.
- Ensure that sockets are in good condition, suitable for use outside if appropriate and in a location where they won't be accessed or damaged by customers.
- Remove equipment from its packaging before installation
- Switch off the electrical supply before connecting

#### **During installation and when using the equipment:**

- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions and retain for future reference
- Ensure that equipment is installed in locations where it will not be damaged and away from flammable materials and decorations.
- Check frequently for any damage to equipment and replace failed lamps as appropriate.
- Always switch off before replacing lamps and use the correct replacement lamp
- Keep equipment packaging for any future storage. If equipment is stored ensure that it is not in damp or excessively hot conditions

**Any permanent fixed installation of equipment that does not require sockets, and the installation of sockets should be undertaken and thereafter maintained by a competent electrician.**

Further information on [electrical safety](#) can be obtained on the HSE website.

## About HSE

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## [HSE inspections target woodworking businesses to tackle occupational lung disease](#)



Ventilation, protective equipment and appropriate guarding are some of the measures businesses should consider as Britain's workplace regulator is carrying out inspections to protect the respiratory health of workers.

From April, health and safety inspectors across Great Britain will be visiting business within woodworking industries such as sawmilling, manufacture of composite boards, and carpentry, as well as other industries where wood dust exposure can occur.

Woodworking industries have the potential for high incidence rates of occupational asthma and work-aggravated asthma caused by worker exposure to

inadequately controlled wood dust in the workplace.

Inspectors will be looking for evidence that employers have considered the control measures required to reduce workers exposure to wood dust, that workers understand the risks of exposure to wood dust, and effective control measures have been put in place to protect workers from harm. Inspectors will take enforcement action when necessary to make sure workers are protected.

*HSE's head of manufacturing David Butter said: "Around 12,000 workers died last year from lung diseases linked to past exposure from work, with thousands more cases of ill-health and working days lost. Wood dust can cause serious health problems. It can cause [asthma](#), which carpenters and joiners are four times more likely to get compared with other UK workers, as well as nasal cancer. Our campaign aims to help businesses whose workers cut and shape wood to take action now to protect their workers' respiratory health.*

*"Through visiting wood working businesses, our inspectors are able to speak to a range of dutyholders and look at the measures they have in place to comply with the guidance and protect workers from respiratory diseases such as occupational asthma and nasal cancer.*

*"Businesses can act now to ensure they are complying with the law by ensuring the control of wood dust at source by fitting and using extraction on machines. Ensuring they fit and use guards on machines to protect fingers and hands and ensure those that use the machine to understand the risks and how to control them. Checking that guards are well adjusted will minimise danger and ensure that dust capture remains effective.*

*"Our inspection initiative aims to ensure employers and workers are aware of the risks associated with the activities they do. They must recognise these dangers and manage these risks through reducing exposure. Dutyholders need to do the right thing, for example, through completing a risk assessment, ensuring workers are trained, appropriate guarding is fitted and adjusted correctly, and reducing exposure using local exhaust ventilation (LEV) and using suitable respiratory protective equipment (RPE) to protect workers, where required."*

For the latest advice and guidance visit [www.hse.gov.uk/woodworking/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/woodworking/); for more information on the programme of inspections follow the campaign on Twitter at @H\_S\_E or on Facebook @hsegovuk. You can also join the conversation at #WorkRight and sign up for HSE's e-bulletin [here](#).

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2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. The inspection programme will be supported by HSE's 'Work-Right'

campaign, aimed to influence employer behaviour by encouraging woodworking industries.