

HSE warns of electrical safety dangers in farms when reacting to manslaughter case in Warwickshire

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has warned against the severe dangers of inadequate electrical safety systems in farm buildings following a recently concluded prosecution at Warwick Crown Court.

Britain's workplace regulator has highlighted the substantial risks arising from using poorly maintained equipment after a woman was killed while cooking food in a farm caravan.

Deana Simpson was electrocuted in 2017 while using a cooker which was poorly insulated and connected at a caravan in Willoughby Farm, near Rugby in Warwickshire.

Amy Kalay, HM Principal Inspector of health and safety, who managed HSE's involvement in the case, said the case has highlighted the severe risks that can arise when farm equipment and buildings are poorly maintained.

Amy said: "This was a completely avoidable and foreseeable incident. Deana was killed because work on an electrical system hadn't been done by a professional electrician with the right skills and experience."

At the time of the incident, Deana shared the caravan with James Atkin, the son of the farmer, Trevor Atkins, who owned the farm at Willoughby Fields

Deana was found collapsed by the cooker by James, who also received an electric shock when he touched the cooker.

Five days after the incident, a qualified electrician examined the electrical installation at the scene and found it was in a poor and dangerous condition. The potential for an electric shock was immediately obvious, with poor and incorrect connections, inadequate earthing and no protective devices in place, as was required by manufacturer's instructions.

Amy said that the dangers can be particularly acute in farm equipment and buildings in rural areas which may not be maintained regularly.

In the course of the investigation into the death of Deanna Simpson led by Warwickshire Police, assisted by HSE, it was established that the generator had been modified several weeks earlier by James Atkins, who was not a qualified electrician. He had fitted a new inverter, despite being told the work needed to be done by a qualified electrician.

Amy added: "Electricity kills or severely injures people every year. You should make sure that the only people who are working with your electrics are competent to do the job. Equipment repairs or alterations to an electrical installation should only be carried out by people with knowledge

of the risks and the precautions needed. Normally this means a professional electrician.”

During the investigation, it emerged that Trevor Atkins had been complicit with the work his son had carried out on his property, and as an employer, had a duty to maintain the electrical system relating to the caravan to ensure that it was not dangerous. As Deana lived in the caravan, he also had a general duty of care towards her to ensure she was not exposed to risks to her safety. It was deemed he had breached those duties.

James Atkins was sentenced for gross negligence manslaughter receiving six year and six months in prison and Trevor Atkins was sentenced for charges under Section 3 of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He received a 10 month prison sentence, suspended for two years.

The post [HSE warns of electrical safety dangers in farms when reacting to manslaughter case in Warwickshire](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Company fined after employees seriously injured in unguarded machinery.](#)

A company that manufactures tissue and paper towels has been fined after an employee suffered serious injuries in unguarded machinery.

Manchester Magistrates’ Court heard how, on 22 September 2018, an employee of Northwood Tissue (Disley) Ltd had entered a running unguarded wet-lap machine at their factory in Stockport to move fabric that was tracking off course. He was pulled into the machine by his arm resulting in a broken wrist, broken and dislocated elbow and snapped forearm.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found a fixed guard was not in place and there was no safe system of work in place to ensure the task could be carried out in a safe way.

Northwood Tissue (Disley) Ltd of Waterside, Disley, Stockport, pleaded guilty to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £120,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,023.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Martin Heywood said: “If the appropriate guards and a suitable safe system of work had been in place, the injuries sustained by the employee could easily have been prevented.”

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>

The post [Company fined after employees seriously injured in unguarded machinery](#). appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Sawmill firm sentenced after serious hand injury](#)

A company has been sentenced after a worker was seriously injured when his hand came into contact with a rotating bandsaw blade.

Blackpool Magistrates' court heard how on 18 April 2019, the employee was working on a multi-head bandsaw machine at P Irving & Sons Ltd sawmill in Carnforth, when the pipes supplying cooling fluid to one of the six band-saw blades became blocked.

The machine had already been stopped several times that morning to replace damaged blades. An engineer was called to fix the issue and the employee assumed the problem had been rectified.

Rather than stopping the machine a further time, the employee pulled apart the base of the cabinet, creating a gap large enough to place his hand inside. Holding a torch to see what was causing the blockage, the employee put his hand inside the gap.

There was no interlock or sensor to this part of the housing to stop the machine, and the sensor to the top of the housing failed to activate, so the machine continued.

The rotating blade caught the back of the employee's right hand severing the tendons. He has undergone several operations since the incident and is still unable to bend his fingers and cannot grip, write or hold objects. He is awaiting further surgery.

A HSE investigation found there were insufficient measures in place to stop

the blade rotating when the cabinet housing was opened. Measures to prevent access to the dangerous rotating blade, such as fixed and interlocked guarding, had not been taken so far as was practicable. This meant the cabinet housing could be opened with the blade still turning and ultimately led to an employee sustaining a significant injury.

P Irving & Sons Ltd of The Sawmills, Hutton Roof, Carnforth pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. They were fined £60,000 and ordered to pay costs of £20,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Leona Cameron said: "The risk of serious injury to employees operating this machine had existed for some considerable time.

"This injury could have been easily prevented, if the risk had been identified.

"Employers should make sure they properly assess and apply effective control measures to minimise the risk from dangerous parts of machinery."



Multi-head bandsaw at P Irving & Son

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Precision tool manufacturer fined after worker severs finger

L.S. Starrett Company Limited, a precision tool manufacturer, has been fined after an employee's index finger was severed and his thumb deeply lacerated in an incident involving a radial arm drilling machine.

Jedburgh Sheriff Court heard that on 2 October 2018, the hole saw operator was using a radial arm drilling machine when his glove became entangled, resulting in the injuries.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) issued two improvement notices to the company following the incident for failing to provide employees with appropriate training on the use of the radial arm drill and failing to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the drill. This should have included informing employees not to wear gloves when using this type of machinery.

L.S. Starrett Company Limited of Oxnam Road, Jedburgh, Scotland pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £100,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Kim Ross commented: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out the correct control measures and safe working practices.

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

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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>
4. For further guidance on Health and Safety in engineering workshops, please go to: [Health and safety in engineering workshops – HSG129 \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://www.hse.gov.uk/HS129/)

The post [Precision tool manufacturer fined after worker severs finger](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Property developer sentenced following excavation collapse](#)

The sole director of a Norfolk based property development firm has been sentenced for the unsafe excavation of land beneath occupied properties.

Norwich Crown Court heard how Lyng Developers Ltd was contracted to excavate a disused railway track, carrying out the work between November and December 2017 to make space for a development of five new properties in Great Eastern Way, Fakenham. The company failed to take measures to prevent the collapse of the excavated walls, which began to gradually crumble at the beginning of 2018.

Although no one was injured as a result of the unsafe work, the tops of the excavated banks were joined with the back gardens of existing properties. The collapse led to substantial loss of property and exposed elderly residents and children to the risk of becoming buried by the collapsing walls.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the job was not planned properly and carried out using only an excavator and two dump trucks. No safe system of work was followed, and no structures were put in place to support the risk of collapse. In addition, the company failed to fully cooperate with the HSE during the investigation and did not remedy the collapsed banks.

Director of Lyng Developers Ltd Timothy Peter Wegg of The Broadway, Scarning, Norfolk pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He has been sentenced to four months in prison suspended for 15 months and ordered to carry out 120 hours of unpaid work. He was also ordered to pay compensation of £12,000 to a member of public who lost property due to collapse and pay costs of £12,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Kasia Urbaniak said: “This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply assessing the risk from working with large and complex excavations and then implementing control measures and safe working practices that are well-known in the construction industry. There is freely available HSE guidance on how to work safely with

excavations.

“Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards and irrespective of whether injury has arisen.”

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