

Council fined after worker diagnosed with HAVS

Wrexham County Borough Council has been fined after a 57-year old man was diagnosed with Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS).

Mold Magistrates' Court heard how the employee of the council's StreetScene department had been diagnosed with HAVS in September 2015.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the council failed to address the issue of HAVS following an audit in February 2011 which identified a failure to assess the risk to employees from vibration. The council had developed a number of policies dating back to 2004 to tackle the risk of HAVS, however it was found these policies were not implemented.

Following the introduction of HAVS occupational health surveillance for users of vibrating tools a further eleven diagnoses of HAVS or Carpal tunnel syndrome have been reported.

Wrexham County Borough Council of the Guildhall, Wrexham pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

The council has been fined £150,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,901.35

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Mhairi Duffy said: "This employee now suffers from a long term, life changing illness. The council should have implemented the policy they devised following the audit in 2011.

"Workers' health should not be made worse by the work they do; all employees have the right to go home healthy at the end of the working day."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It helps Great Britain work well by applying a broad range of regulatory interventions and scientific expertise, to prevent work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training, new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement.
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>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

HSE launches second phase of construction inspection campaign

Construction projects across Britain are being urged to act now to ensure the health and safety of their workers is protected as the second phase of a targeted inspection initiative gets underway today.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) says 43 workers were fatally injured in 2015/16, and an estimated ten times that number died from construction related ill-health, with a further 65,000 self-reported non-fatal injuries.

HSE is now asking every construction contractor, client and designer to ensure they are not adding to this unacceptable toll of harm by failing to manage well-known risks.

In addition to things such as falls from height, the campaign will focus on control of harmful dusts including respirable silica from concrete, brick and stone, asbestos and wood dust, as well as work at height, structural safety, materials handling, good order and welfare provision.

HSE points to the mis-conception that health issues cannot be controlled in construction. It says harmful dust, whether silica or wood, is a serious issue and can be managed effectively with the right design, equipment and training. Health effects may not be immediate, but the ultimate impact on workers and their families can be devastating.

HSE carried out over 2000 inspections during the first phase of the initiative earlier this year with action being taken to address these issues in almost half of visits.

HSE's Chief Inspector of Construction and Director of Construction Division Peter Baker commented: "In phase 1 of this campaign HSE's inspectors found lots of good examples of small sites working safely and protecting workers health from exposure to harmful dusts, proving it can be done. My message to smaller businesses is don't wait for an accident or a visit from an HSE inspector – learn from the success of others and act now.

"Nearly half of construction fatal accidents and injuries reported to HSE involved refurbishment work.

"Some small refurbishment sites continue to cut corners and not properly protect their workers resulting in an unacceptable number of deaths and injuries each year."

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www.hse.gov.uk

2. More information about harm in the construction industry can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/industry/construction/> HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. Free HSE guidance is available for construction employers and workers at www.hse.gov.uk about how to manage risks and prevent harm, as well as maintain productivity and business viability.
4. Join the conversation online at [@H_S_E](#) on twitter and [SaferSites](#) on Facebook.
5. For more information on HSE's campaigns visit: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/strategy/index.htm> for Helping Great Britain Work Well and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gohomehealthy/index.htm> for Go Home Healthy.

Heal

[Company fined after worker seriously injured](#)

A North-West specialist sheet metal fabrication company has been fined after an employee was left seriously injured when metal sheets fell onto his leg.

Liverpool Magistrates' Court heard how, on 5 February 2016, the employee and his supervisor were searching for materials within the workshop of Shearfab Limited when metal sheets that were not safely secured fell onto the employee's leg. The employee suffered a fracture to his left leg that required an operation to insert a large metal plate with nine screws.

The HSE investigation found that the company, despite previously being served improvement notices, had no system to ensure the sheet metal was always stored safely, the company had fixed and mobile racking, but there was no system in place to ensure they were used effectively.

Shearfab Limited, of Oldgate, St Michaels Industrial Estate, Widnes, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and was fined £10,000 with full prosecution costs.

HSE inspector Kate Lyon said after the hearing: "This was an entirely preventable incident. There were a number of failings however the underlying cause was poor health and safety management. Hopefully others can learn from

this incident and adopt safer and better working practices. Metal plates and sheets are most stable when laid flat. When stacked on edge they should always be adequately supported in suitable storage equipment, such as toast racking.”

More information regarding safe storage and handling of steel and other metal stock can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg246.pdf>

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[Updated online Asbestos Essentials for Non-Licensed work with asbestos](#)

Asbestos Essentials is a task manual for building, maintenance and allied trades on how to safely carry out non-licensed work involving asbestos.

Asbestos essentials task sheets

For advice on when and how you should use these sheets make sure you printout and read [A0 – Introduction to Asbestos essentials](#).

Equipment and method sheets

Work with asbestos cement (AC) (non-licensed)

Working with textured coatings (TC) containing asbestos (non-licensed)

Strictly controlled minor work on Asbestos Insulating Board (AIB)

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Removal and replacement of other asbestos containing materials

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