

Textiles manufacturer fined after employee suffers serious burns at work

A textiles manufacturer was fined after a worker was seriously injured when he was covered by hot dye and steam during a maintenance job at the company's site in Alfreton, Derbyshire.

South Derbyshire Magistrates' Court heard how, on 4 June 2019, a maintenance worker was checking a fault on an industrial dye pressure vessel, used to dye long lengths of fabric, after steam had been seen coming from the main drain vent. A valve was slightly open and air lines were removed and replaced in incorrect positions, which caused the valve to instantly open releasing 6,000 litres of hot dye liquor. The employee suffered 20 per cent burns to his body including both arms, legs and buttocks.



An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Guilford Europe Ltd did not have effective procedures in place for fault-finding when employees encountered a problem with machinery. There were no instructions to employees on what constituted fault-finding or at what stage, isolation of the plant was required. Neither was there any requirement for a permit system for undertaking maintenance on pressure systems. There was also an insufficient level of monitoring in place to review maintenance operations to ensure employees were working safely.

Guilford Europe Ltd of Cotes Park Industrial Estate, Somercotes, Alfreton, Derbyshire pleaded guilty of breaching Section 2(1) of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. They were fined £100,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,751.60.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Leigh Stanley, said: "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.

"If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, the life changing injuries sustained by the employee could 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. 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>

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