

Three companies fined after engineer electrocuted in hospital kitchen

Three companies have been fined a total of £600,000 after an engineer was fatally electrocuted while repairing an appliance in a hospital kitchen.

Craig Stocker, working for Serviceline (part of AFE Group), died on 13 December 2017 while fixing a macerator (food waste disposal unit) at Bishops Wood Hospital, operated by BMI Healthcare (now known as Circle Health Group Limited) in Northwood, Middlesex.

The 36-year-old, who was originally from Stevenage, Hertfordshire, but lived in Letchworth, came into contact with a metal section of the macerator that had been electrified as water had entered the machine's wiring.



Bishops Wood Hospital kitchen area – sink and macerator underneath

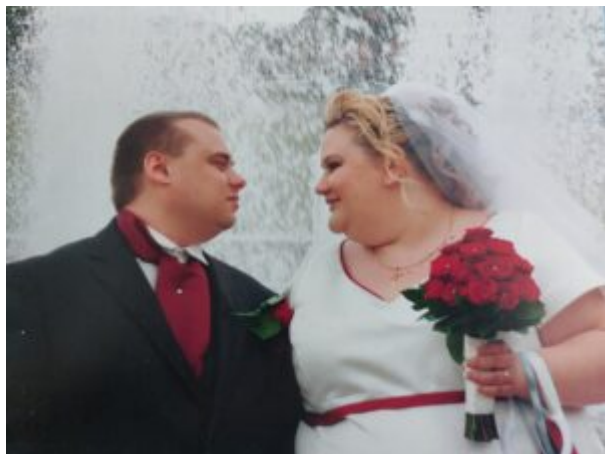
The macerator was not protected by an earth wire and there was no residual current device (RCD) to prevent fatal exposure to the electrical current.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation into this incident found that Imperial Machine Company's design of the macerator had serious flaws. The earthing wire could be connected in a way that meant it was ineffective, and the equipment was also permanently live.

When the macerator was installed by McFarlane Telfer in 2013, they had not acted on the manufacturer's instructions, which required that a residual current device (RCD) was fitted.

BMI Healthcare did not identify that the RCD had not been fitted and the machine was operated for several years before the incident occurred.

HSE guidance on electrical safety can be found here: [Electrical safety – HSE](#)



Craig's wife Leah said: "Craig and I would enjoy dinners out, trips to the cinema, day trips to the seaside and we loved to go on holidays, with Tenerife being a particular favourite. Craig was a family man, both with his own family and my family and not forgetting his lads holidays with Martin, Owen and many other of his friends. Craig would also enjoy spending time with his childhood friend Mark who he spent a lot of time with sharing his interests with Mark, particularly American football (NFL) and WWE shows.

"He was a kind-hearted man who was a hardworking, caring individual. Craig had a passion for American football, WWE wrestling and listening to music from morning until night and many other hobbies. He was the life and soul of any party.

"On the day that Craig died, our lives changed in many ways, nothing can prepare you for this, nothing can prepare you for the psychological and emotional turmoil this causes to one's mental health, Craig is missed by many people, myself and his mum Dianne in particular. Craig you are missed, you will always be missed but forever in our thoughts and hearts you will remain."

Following a trial at Southwark Crown Court:

- BMI Healthcare (now Circle Health Group Limited), of Cannon Street, London, was found guilty of breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act. 1974. The company was fined £450,000 and ordered to pay £106,895 in costs on 3 October 2023.
- McFarlane Telfer Limited, of Westacott Way, Littlewick Green, Maidenhead, was found guilty of breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act. 1974. The company was fined £70,000 and ordered to pay £106,753 in costs on 3 October 2023.

AFE Group Limited (trading as Serviceline) were found not guilty of breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

On 2 March 2022, Imperial Machine Company Limited, of Whisby Road, Lincoln, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 6(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay £12,945 in costs at Southwark Crown Court on 3 October 2023.

HSE inspector Kevin Shorten said: "Our thoughts today are with the family of

Mr Stocker. He should have returned home safely at the end of his working day but, because of the failings of these three companies, he did not.

“The fines imposed should underline to manufacturers, contractors and building owners that the courts, and HSE, take a failure to ensure electrical safety extremely seriously.

“We will not hesitate to take action against companies which do not do all that they should to keep people safe.

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. 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>
4. Guidance on electrical safety can be found here: [Electrical safety – HSE](#)
5. Following a trial at Southwark Crown Court, AFE Group Limited was found not guilty of breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act. 1974.