

Tree service company sentenced after employee suffers finger amputation

Josh Noon Tree Services has been sentenced today after a worker suffered serious hand injuries when his hand was caught in a log splitting machine.

Exeter Magistrates' Court heard that on 29 December 2017, 33-year-old tree surgeon Darren Gillespie was working with another employee on the log splitting machine at the company's site at Lapford, Crediton.

Mr Gillespie was placing logs in the splitter and then removing the split logs and throwing them into the log store while another employee would operate the log splitter. His hand became trapped whilst working on the machine and when he pulled away he found his right-hand index finger had been completely severed along with the tip of the middle finger.

The court heard that even after surgery, Mr Gillespie still suffers from pain the incident has significantly impacted his ability to continue to work as a tree surgeon.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that due to a lack of guarding or two-handed controls, the machine involved in the incident presented a foreseeable risk of serious injury to operators. The inclusion of a second person loading logs onto the splitter increased the likelihood that a serious injury would occur.

Joshua Mark Noon of Highfield Close, Lapford, Crediton, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 3(2) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, he has been fined £3100 and ordered to pay costs of £6019.90.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Paul Mannell said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures for machinery guarding and safe working practices.

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

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>

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