

Tree surgeon fined after 16-year-old employee sustains life-changing injuries

A self-employed tree surgeon has been fined after a 16-year-old employee suffered serious injuries following a chainsaw incident.

Glasgow Sheriff Court heard how on 19 March 2018, at a domestic property in Glasgow, self-employed Dominic Di Pasquale, trading as Treetops Tree Surgeons, was using a chainsaw to fell trees and then remove the branches, while his employee collected the sections. As Mr Di Pasquale began to remove one of the branches, the young worker attempted to pick it up, unaware that it was still attached to the felled tree, the chainsaw jammed, pulling the employee's right arm into the blade. The 16-year-old sustained a partial amputation of his index finger and deep lacerations to his dominant hand, requiring multiple operations over a three-year period. These life changing injuries have left him permanently disfigured.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Mr Di Pasquale failed to provide a safe system of work which ensured chainsaw operators maintained safe working distances from other employees, to prevent them coming into contact with the blade. In addition, employees were not adequately trained or supervised when carrying out work with chainsaws.

Dominic Di Pasquale of Motherwell pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and has been fined £10,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Kim Ross said: "This incident was entirely preventable; the risks from working with chainsaws are well known. Employers have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide their employees with the appropriate information, instruction and training.

"This case particularly highlights the importance of protecting young workers who may be less familiar with risks in the workplace. HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action, especially when young people are put at risk."

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>

4. For more information on working safely with vehicles at work, please visit:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/>