

Company fined after employee suffers serious burns

A company that produces metal sheet components has been fined after a worker suffered burns to his, face, ears and head.

Hereford Magistrates' Court heard how, on 12 September 2016, an employee of Mettech (Hereford) Limited sustained burns when attempting to light a gas burner present within a powder coating oven.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the gas oven involved did not meet current health and safety standards in that it did not have a flame failure device to prevent the accumulation of unlit gas within the oven. And the gas oven had not been adequately maintained or inspected by a person competent in gas safety. The company also failed to ensure that their employees followed a safe system of work.

Mettech (Hereford) Limited of Folbigg Court, Rotherwas Industrial Estate, Hereford has pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and has been fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2685.45.

After the hearing HSE inspector Sarah Reilly commented: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"Companies need to be made aware that they employ people who are competent in gas safety matters to inspect and maintain their gas oven appliances and to ensure that employees are properly trained to light gas ovens."

Notes to Editors:

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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>

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

Company fined after worker suffers life changing injuries

A construction company has today been fined after a worker fell through a roof and suffered life changing injuries.

Glasgow Sheriff Court heard how, on 22 October 2015, the self-employed joiner was working on the construction site at Claremont Terrace, Glasgow, when he fell approximately 3.6 metres onto a pile of timber cut-offs. The employee sustained multiple fractures to his ribs and to his spine.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that although the company had a risk assessment in place, there were no sufficient measures in place to prevent falls through a void in the roof of the building.

Fleming Buildings Limited of Auchinloch Road, Lenzie, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005, and Section 33(1)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £9,335.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Graham Mitchell said: "Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known. This incident might have been prevented if suitable and sufficient measures had been in place such as a crash desk or safety net.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the standards required."

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Double-investigation leads to fine for North East car parts manufacturer Faltec Europe Limited

A South Tyneside car parts manufacturer has been fined £1.6million after a Legionnaires' disease outbreak and an explosion occurred at the same plant within a year.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigated and have prosecuted Faltec Europe Limited in relation to both incidents.

Five people fell seriously ill following the Legionnaires' disease outbreak and one worker suffered serious burns from the explosion incident.

Newcastle Crown Court heard that between October 2014 and June 2015, two employees, two agency workers and a local resident fell seriously ill with Legionnaires Disease. HSE found the illness was caused by Faltec's failure to effectively manage its water cooling systems within the factory, causing the legionella bacteria within the water supply to grow to potentially lethal levels.

In relation to the explosion incident, the same court heard that on 16 October 2015, an operator attempted to recover a part that came off production rollers at the plant in Boldon. There is an explosive atmosphere within the machine during normal production. The part he was retrieving came into contact with an electrostatic grid, which created a spark and caused a dust explosion. The 19-year-old man suffered first degree burns to his face and arms. HSE found that adequate measures were not put in place to protect operators from explosion risks, this was despite previous explosions having occurred.

Concerning the legionella incident, Faltec Europe Limited of Didcot Way, Boldon in Tyne and Wear pleaded guilty to breaches of Section 2 (1) and 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA). In relation to the explosion, the company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of HSWA. The company was fined £1.6million and ordered to pay costs of £75,159.73 and a victim surcharge of £120.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspectors Fiona McGarry and Michael Kingston said: "The explosion and outbreak of Legionnaires' disease at the Faltec factory had a major impact on the six people affected, with some suffering long-term ill-health as a result. In addition, the incidents raised concern amongst other employees and the local community.

"Supported by colleagues from Public Health England and South Tyneside Council HSE investigated and identified breaches in both cases. In pleading guilty to three charges under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 the company have acknowledged these breaches.

“Legionnaires’ disease is a relatively uncommon, but potentially fatal form of pneumonia. When water systems are not properly controlled and maintained there is a risk of exposing both employees and the wider community to Legionella bacteria. Following the outbreak, and HSE enforcement, improved control measures have now been implemented by the company to better manage the Legionella risks at the site.”

“Furthermore, where dangerous substances create a fire and explosion risk, there needs to be adequate control measures in place to prevent an explosion or mitigate the consequences. The risks should have been assessed before the machine was put into use and the previous incidents should have resulted in a comprehensive review by a competent person. Operators need to be trained on the fire and explosion risks and understand the required controls”.

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3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Further information regarding the risks associated with Legionnaires disease is available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/>
5. Further information regarding the risks associated fire and explosion is available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/fireandexplosion/index.htm>

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North east sawmill fined after employee has his leg amputated

A sawmill in north east England has been fined after a serious incident at its site resulted in an employee having his leg amputated above the knee.

Sunderland Magistrates’ Court heard that, in July 2016, an employee of A & J Scott Limited attempted to clear a blockage on the conveyor feed and edger machine. As he climbed onto the machine he was caught by the moving parts, pushed forward and his trailing leg was amputated below the knee by the saw blade.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had not ensured that measures were taken to prevent access to the dangerous moving parts of the sawmilling equipment. They also failed to safeguard employees who would be working at height whilst on the machine and take steps to prevent employees standing on the machinery whilst it was live, and in a state that it could be turned on at any time.

A & J Scott Limited of Station Sawmills, Wooperton, Alnwick pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £400,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,392.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Paul Wilson 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.

"Had this been done then this worker would not have received life changing injuries".

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Company fined after workers put in danger

A company has been fined after workers were spotted carrying out unsafe work on various roofs.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court heard that, on three separate occasions in 2016, a director of Quality Food Products (Aberdeen) Ltd carried out work at height when there were no suitable or sufficient measures in place to prevent him, nor the employees who were assisting him, falling a distance likely to cause personal injury.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that on one of

those occasions the director and an employee accessed the roof by standing on the prongs of a fork lift truck which had a wooden pallet attached to it. During the course of the works they were seen to toss waste materials to the ground. Two other incidents were detailed which related to works carried out primarily by the director with brief assistance from an employee.

Photographs of the illegal activities were taken by concerned witnesses and HSE was alerted.

Quality Food Products (Aberdeen) Ltd of West Tullos Industrial Estate, Aberdeen, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6 (3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and was fined £10,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Connor Gibson said: "Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the standards required."

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