

Leading sandwich bread baker fined after worker loses finger

A nationwide bakery has been fined more than £360,000 after one of its employees lost a finger in machinery at a site in Northamptonshire.

Jacksons Bakery, a leading supplier of bread used in the commercial making of sandwiches, was given the fine after an engineer had a finger on his right hand caught in a flour sifting machine.

The then 31-year-old was assisting colleagues as they attempted to maintain the machine by clearing a blockage at the plant in Corby on 2 February 2023. Following removal of a guard, as the engineer assisted with the task, he checked the tension of a drive belt and his hand got pulled around the bottom pulley which resulted in the amputation of part of his right middle finger.

The engineer was unaware that the machine had been switched back on.



The worker caught a finger in the pulley on a flour sifter machine

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Jacksons Bakery Limited failed to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all their employees.

In this instance there was a failure to implement a safe system of work ensuring that machinery was isolated and then locked off during maintenance work when fixed guards would be removed.

Additionally, HSE found that engineers were unclear on when to isolate and 'lock out tag out' machines due to an absence of adequate training and instruction – and the fact that it was custom and practice to not robustly isolate and lock off illustrated an absence of adequate supervision and monitoring.

Jacksons Bakery Limited of The Riverside Building, Liverstone Road, Hessle, East Yorkshire, HU13 0DZ, pleaded guilty to contravening a requirement of section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

The company was fined £366,666 and was ordered to pay £5,386 costs at a hearing at Wellingborough Magistrates Court on 3 October 2024.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Rebecca Gibson said “This unnecessary incident highlights the duty on employers to ensure that there are robust procedures in place relating to maintenance activities.

“If an appropriate ‘lock out tag out’ procedure had been produced and implemented and with suitable training, the serious injury would have been avoided.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Samantha Wells and supported by HSE paralegal, Rebecca Withell.

Notes to editors:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences in England and Wales can be found [here](#) and for those in Scotland [here](#).
5. HSE guidance on [machinery safety](#) is available.

[Chemicals firm fined following explosion](#)

A solvents manufacturer has been fined following an explosion at its factory in the Scottish Borders.

The blast at Rathburn Chemicals in Walkerburn on 10 January 2020 resulted in a laboratory, which was part of the factory, being demolished.

It was likely caused by excessive pentane vapour, generated by the company’s distillation process, overheating and being ignited by the site’s extraction system.

No one was injured by the explosion.



A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found Rathburn Chemicals had an inadequate system in place which failed to control the amount of steam and heat being generated during its distillation process. The company also failed to adequately detect any signs of overheating which could lead to flammable vapour being ignited.

HSE guidance can be found at: [The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 – Fire and explosion \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/publications/otherpublications/2002/20020001.htm)



Rathburn Chemicals (Manufacturing) Limited, of Caberston Road, Walkerburn, Peeblesshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 33(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £3,000 at Lothian and Borders

Sheriff Court on 20 September 2024.

HSE inspector Isabelle Martin said: “This was a serious incident and it is fortunate that no one was injured by the blast. The explosion could have been avoided had Rathburn Chemicals simply carried out the correct control measures and safe working practices.

“This case also highlights the risks from distilling flammable substances, the need for reliable control measures and adequate training of employees. Companies looking for further advice on this issue can find readily available guidance on the HSE website.”

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[Manufacturing company fined as worker suffers six bone fractures](#)

A manufacturing company has been fined after an employee broke his arm while operating machinery at its site in Warwickshire.

Andrew Elson, from Rugby, suffered multiple fractures to the ulna and radius bones in his right arm while working at Screening Consultancy and Supplies Ltd on 25 November 2022.



1. The radial arm drill
that caused Andrew
Elson's injuries

The 54-year-old had been clearing debris off the bed of a radial arm drill at the firm's site on Somers Road in Rugby, when his right hand became entangled in the machine.

This led to Mr Elson sustaining six different bone fractures in his right hand and arm, that required surgery.



2. An X-ray of Andrew Elson's
hand showing his hand and arm
fractures

He said: "I totally lost my independence for around two months and my wife had to do everything.

"I don't know what the future holds. I work a manual job with my hands, I don't know how long I can continue to do this for.

"I still have trouble using my hands and fingers, and sometimes I wake up and they are stiff, numb, and achy."

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Screening Consultancy and Supplies Ltd had failed to undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk associated with this work activity, and subsequently failed to implement a safe system of work.



3. Andrew Elson sustained six different bone fractures to his right hand and arm

HSE guidance can be found at: [Health and safety in engineering workshops – HSG129 \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/hsg129).

Screening Consultancy and Supplies Ltd, of Somers Road, Rugby, Warwickshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £28,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,616 at Birmingham Magistrates' Court on 19 September 2024.

HSE inspector Charlie Rowe said: "This prosecution highlights how employers should adequately assess the risks and then ensure they have a safe system of work in place for the operation of all machinery."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Chloe Ward and Neenu Bains, and supported by paralegal officer Melissa Wardle.

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Company fined after 'loving' grandad dies from fall

A grandfather died after falling through a hole in his own bathroom that had been left by workers.

Kenneth Armitage landed on the kitchen floor below, in an incident his daughter Suzy said "should never have happened."

The bathroom in Mr Armitage's house on Whitestone Drive in Huntington, York had been getting converted into a wet room by the construction company Cooper and Westgate.

The company had removed the room's floorboards as it accessed pipework, but left an unguarded hole in the floor on 8 February 2019.



Cooper and Westgate had removed the room's floorboards, but left an unguarded hole in the floor

The 81-year-old later fell through the hole and was found dead by his son-in-law the following evening on 9 February.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found Cooper and Westgate failed to adequately secure the hole as its employees were not properly trained. The company had also failed to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, nor a method statement for the work involved.



Kenneth Armitage

HSE guidance can be found at: [Working at height: A brief guide \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/working-at-height/)

Kenneth's daughter, Suzy, said: "Our dad, who was sadly taken away from us, was everything to us. He was the kindest person you could ever meet.

"He was a fantastic dad to me, my brother and a loving grandad to all our children.

"I can't believe he has gone, I keep thinking it's a horrible nightmare and I will wake up and he'll be there. Our hearts were broken that day and may never heal. It should have never happened.

"We are all still struggling to come to terms with losing him."

Cooper and Westgate Co. Ltd, of Navigation Court, Calder Park, Wakefield, West Yorkshire 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 £150,000 and ordered to pay £50,000 in costs at Leeds Magistrates' Court on 17 September 2024.

HM inspector of health and safety Yolande Burns-Sleightholme, of HSE, said: "Employers need to fully assess and control the risks from work at height, caused by creating holes in domestic properties and recognise the importance of securing them effectively. They should then pass this knowledge on to their employees through suitable training and guidance.

“This incident could so easily have been avoided had Cooper & Westgate properly assessed the risks, put in place safe working practices and provided the correct training to its employees.”

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