

Bedding manufacturer fined £80,000 after machine operator loses fingers

A leading bedding manufacturer has been fined £80,000 after an employee suffered horrific injuries when his hand was drawn into a machine.

John Cotton Group Limited faced legal action following the incident on 9 December 2020 – which resulted in the machine operator having three fingers on their left hand amputated.

The incident occurred due to there being [inadequate procedures in place to allow safe interventions with machinery](#).

The 36-year-old, from Wigan, had noticed a fault with the machine and in an attempt to resolve the issue, tried to power down the machine to allow access. However, the machine was still moving, and his left hand contacted dangerous moving parts.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Enforcement Lawyer Radha Vaithianathan told Manchester City Magistrates Court how the man's fingers were partially severed by the machinery with the remainder having to be surgically amputated at hospital.

An investigation by HSE found John Cotton Group Limited, a leading manufacturer of bedding, had not made adequate arrangements to prevent access to dangerous moving parts of the machine. The company failed to provide a sufficiently robust procedure for powering down the machine to allow safe access. There was also inadequate training, monitoring and supervision of employees for dealing with problems with the machine.

John Cotton Group Limited, of Beaver Court, Lockett Road, Wigan pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and 33(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc. act 1974. The company was fined £80,000 and was ordered to pay £4,989.05 costs at a hearing at Manchester City Magistrates Court on 5 June 2023.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Thomas Delroy said: "This severe injury could have been easily prevented and the risk should have been identified."

"Employers should make sure they have a robust procedure for isolating machinery, and they have appropriate training, supervision and monitoring to ensure it is adhered to"

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.

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. Guidance on [machinery interventions and safety](#) is available.