

Car retailer fined for exposing worker to the risk of developing occupational asthma

A car retailer operating across the South East of England has been fined after a car bodywork sprayer developed occupational asthma.

West Hampshire Magistrates' Court heard that, between October 2011 and March 2018, an employee of Harwoods Limited at Audi Southampton had been spraying using paints that contained isocyanates without adequate controls measures in place. Isocyanates are classed as substances hazardous to health, exposure to which can lead to the development of asthma which can have serious life-changing effects.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to ensure adequate control measures were in place to minimise exposure to paints containing isocyanates, therefore exposing the employee to the risk of asthma.

Harwoods Limited of Liverpool Gardens, Worthing pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 7(1) of The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 and have been fined £120,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,657.55.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Nicola Pinckney said: "This serious health condition could so easily have been avoided by simply implementing correct control measures and appropriate working practices.

"Controlling employee exposure to hazardous substances is a legal requirement on employers and HSE provides guidance on how control can be achieved.

"Appropriate controls could include use of a spray booth to carry out the paint spraying, use of a suitable air-fed respirator, checks to ensure equipment was adequately maintained and training provided to ensure the employee knew the risks and how to control them."

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. HSE guidance and information about asthma can be found at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asthma/about.htm>)

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