

Chemical company fined after agency worker suffers chemical burns

- Flowchem UK Ltd fined £50,000 after worker suffered chemical burns from corrosive drain un-blocker
- HSE found inadequate training, PPE not routinely worn, and insufficient first aid provisions
- HSE guidance is available

A manufacturer of household cleaning products in Nottingham has been fined after an agency worker suffered burns to her face, eye, neck and arm when she was doused in a corrosive sink and drain un-blocker.

Marzanna Sokolowska was working for Flowchem UK Ltd at its manufacturing site in Nottingham on 2nd November 2023 when she was doused with a significant quantity of corrosive liquid after accidentally opening the wrong valve on a 1,000 litre container.

Ms Sokolowska was working in a team decanting sink and drain un-blocker liquid from bulk containers at shoulder height into smaller containers for sale.

Ms Sokolowska accidentally opened the outlet valve on an adjacent container to the one fitted with a decanting hose, which had no end cap fitted. The liquid sprayed out under considerable force splashing her in the face and upper body.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the system of work employed by Flowchem exposed their employees and agency workers to health and safety risks in the event of leaks or losses of containment.

Training arrangements, including the provision of adequate information to workers with limited understanding of English was inadequate. Whilst some personal protective equipment (PPE) was provided by the company, it was routinely not worn, and there was inadequate supervision or monitoring to ensure the use of PPE.

Whilst eye-wash bottles were provided, the first aid arrangements available did not take account of the potential scale of any exposure, including the lack of a shower for example.

HSE guidance on the [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations \(COSHH\)](#) states that employers should identify the risks arising from the use of substances hazardous to health and put in place effective measures to prevent exposure and mitigate the consequences of any such exposure. These measures should include consideration of the systems of work under which the dangerous substances are handled, the training and supervision of those

engaged in the work and the provision of adequate PPE and first aid arrangements.

Flowchem UK Ltd of Mark Street, Sandiacre, Nottingham NG10 5AD pleaded guilty to breaches of Section 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £7,247.40 in costs with a victim surcharge of £2000 at Nottingham Magistrates Court on 12 February 2026.

HSE Inspector, Angus Robbins, said: “The systems of work employed by Flowchem unnecessarily exposed workers to risks of injury from exposure to corrosive chemicals. More suitable working methods, including avoidance of decanting large volumes stored at or above head height could have been employed. Following the incident, Flowchem changed their working methods to eliminate these risks.

“Ms Sokolowska suffered very painful injuries and was unable to work for a considerable period. Of particular concern were the burns to her eyelid and eye. Fortunately, she has made a reasonable recovery and been able to return to work.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Andrew Siddall and paralegal officer, Farhat Basir.

Further Information

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. Relevant guidance can be found here [COSHH basics: overview – COSHH](#)
5. 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 can be found [here](#).