

Chemical company fined after worker suffered burns

Robert McBride Ltd was sentenced today for safety breaches after a 31-year-old worker suffered 13 per cent superficial burns to his right arm and hand following the ignition of flammable vapours at the company's site in Hull.

Beverley Magistrates' Court heard that on 21 August 2017, a batch of hairspray was being mixed in a 10,000 litre stainless steel mixing vessel. Flammable vapours were created within the mixing vessel as a result of heating.

Ethanol was pumped directly into the vessel via pipework from an external storage tank. Other constituents (liquid and powder) were added to the vessel via a manway lid on the top of the vessel. The mixing process then required the addition of heat via an integral steam coil within the vessel.

As the worker was adding powders into the vessel via the lid using a metal scoop, flammable vapours leaving the vessel via the lid ignited, briefly engulfing his upper torso.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found there was an extraction system at the lip of the manway lid to remove vapours from this area, but it was not adequate to prevent a build-up of a flammable atmosphere. The ignition source is likely to have been a spark from the metal scoop, or static electricity build up on the workers clothing.

Robert McBride Ltd of Hornscroft Park, Kinswood, Hull pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(1) of the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002. The company was fined £480,000 and ordered to pay costs of £13,441.80.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector David Stewart said: "Dutyholders should carry out a DSEAR risk assessment in areas where there is a potential for the creation of explosive or flammable atmospheres in order to identify adequate control measures."

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. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/)^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>^[3]
4. Please see the link below to the page on HSE's website that is the best guide to doing it the right way:

[DSEAR Regulations – Fire and explosion \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/dsear/fire-explosion/)