

Company fined £200,000 after worker fractures arm

A manufacturing company has been fined after an employee was drawn in to a machine and suffered multiple fractures to his left arm.

The man, who is from Newcastle, had recently started working as a manufacturing operative for Gates Engineering & Services UK Limited at its site on Bassington Drive in Cramlington, and was undergoing training when he was assisting another worker on the company's 60-metre lathe on 12 November 2021. The new employee, who was 22 at the time of the incident, was working at the rear of the lathe when the rubber material he had just applied fell from the steel mandrel.

He instinctively reached to grab the material, and at the same time the lathe started, pulling him into the machine. This resulted in his arm being broken in two places.

<https://press.hse.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Accident-web-under-2mb.mp4>

The machine was used to wrap rubber and other materials around a steel mandrel to form hose bodies for industrial hoses. The system of work at Gates Engineering involved one employee working at the front of the machine operating the controls, with a second employee assisting from the rear, helping to manually position the rubber materials being applied.

However, the manufacturer's manual for the machine stated that the lathe should be enclosed with a fixed perimeter guard, and that access to the work area by persons other than the machine operator prevented.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to take effective measures to prevent access to the dangerous parts of the lathe, and that its system of work required employees to stand in an area that was meant to be enclosed by guards. For HSE guidance visit: [Introduction to machinery safety – HSE](#)

Gates Engineering & Services UK Limited, of Bassington Industrial Estate, Bassington Drive, Cramlington, Northumberland, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay £3,653.70 in costs at Newcastle Magistrates' Court on 4 May 2023.

HSE inspector Stephen Garner said: "After this accident, the company was able to install perimeter guards to prevent access to the rear of its 60-metre lathe, and altered its system of work so that operation of the lathe could be carried out from the safe area at the front of the machine – as intended by its manufacturer. This accident could have been prevented if action had been

taken earlier.

“A third-party safety audit commissioned by Gates Engineering, dated 16 January 2018, identified that there was access to moving parts at the rear of the machine due to inadequate guarding. Although this report failed to recommend any remedial measures, taken in combination with the information in the machine’s manual, this represented a missed opportunity to properly safeguard the machine before an accident occurred. Ultimately this accident was both foreseeable and preventable.”

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
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. For HSE guidance visit: [Introduction to machinery safety – HSE](#)