

Company fined after an employee died and another worker was seriously injured

Concrete manufacturer Treanor Pujol Ltd was sentenced for safety breaches following two separate incidents including the death of an employee and series injuries to a second worker.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigators also identified several electrical safety failings.

Leeds Crown Court heard how on 5 June 2014 Treanor employee Mathew Fulleylove, 30, was operating a mobile saw unit on Line 12 at the factory in Stourton, Leeds, while another employee was operating a mobile bed cleaner on Line 11. Mr Fulleylove was standing on the footwell of the saw unit as the other machine passed on the adjacent production line. As the bed cleaner came past, Matthew's head was crushed between the frames of the two machines and he was killed instantly.

An investigation by HSE found that it was the nature of production for machines to routinely pass each other on adjacent lines. On lines 11 and 12 the gap between the passing bed cleaner and saw machines was very small – between 65 and 93mm at different parts of the frames. It was identified that Treanor Pujol Ltd failed to identify the risk of crushing posed by the passing machines; failed to devise a safe system of work to control this risk and failed to provide adequate training in such a procedure to employees.

On 12 April 2018, in a second incident, a 47-year-old employee was operating a hooks machine, which embeds hooks into precast concrete when a fault developed during the operation. While attempting to reset the machine his elbow leant on a concrete dispenser box and a metal shutter designed to close off the flow of concrete. The metal shutter closed, trapping his hand resulting in a fracture and partial de-gloving of his left hand.

An investigation by HSE found that the machine was not fitted with working interlocks, meaning several of the machine doors could be opened to gain access to dangerous moving parts whilst the machine was operating.

In the early stages of the investigation into the incident involving Mr Fulleylove, HSE inspectors also noticed several electrical safety concerns with the equipment in the manufacturing shed. Inspectors carried out numerous visits between 2014 and 2018 and discovered further failings, one of which related to electrical equipment not being suitably constructed or protected from the environment. It was left in wet, dirty, dusty and corrosive conditions, which resulted in rapid deterioration and safety features becoming inoperable over time. This exposed employees to a risk of serious personal injury or death.

Treanor Pujol Ltd of former Bison Works site, Pontefract Road Leeds pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, and breaching Regulation 3(1)(a) of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 by failing to comply with Regulation 6(c). The company has been fined £285,000 and ordered to pay costs of £56,324.97.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Kate Dixon said: "Treanor Pujol Ltd should have identified the risk of crushing between passing machines on the production lines. The company should have taken steps to reduce and control the residual risk, organising production to minimise the likelihood of machines passing each other on adjacent lines, as well as devising and implementing a safe system of work.

"This should have included a designated place of safety where operators were required to stand as a machine passed. The operator's manual for the bed cleaning machine stated an exclusion zone around the machine at 655mm should be implemented. If this had been in place, it would have addressed the significant crushing hazard and prevented the death of Mr Fulleylove."

Ms Dixon added: "In regard to the second incident, the company should have ensured that the dangerous parts of the Hooks Machine could not be accessed by anyone whilst they were moving by way of suitable guarding arrangements.

"Duty holders should ensure they carry out site specific risk assessments to identify any issues relevant to a particular location, task or piece of equipment. It is important to ensure where safe systems of work are required, employees are properly trained and monitored to ensure the correct way of working is followed."

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