

Company fined after operative receives fatal head injury at work

- Worker fatally injured after becoming entangled in unguarded machinery.
- HSE investigation found failure to prevent access to dangerous moving parts.
- Company could have implemented recognised industry safety measures.

A South Yorkshire wire company has been sentenced following serious health and safety breaches after a worker sustained fatal injuries at its premises in Penistone.

Sheffield Magistrates' Court heard how, on 18 November 2021, an operative died after becoming entangled in an unguarded wire drawing and recoiling machine at Stanley Wire Limited's site on Talbot Road. The machine, known as a 'Gravity Block', had exposed moving parts which the worker was able to access.



The machine, known as a 'Gravity Block'

The incident resulted in the operative sustaining fatal head injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had failed to take effective measures to prevent employees from accessing dangerous moving parts of the wire drawing machine. The investigation identified that the company should have carried out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for the machine, and subsequently developed a safe system of work and clearly communicated this to its workforce.

HSE also found that fixed closed guards, interlocks or pressure mats should have been installed to prevent operatives from entering the Gravity Block while it was rotating. The company could have appointed a designated competent person on site and provided formal training to operatives, rather than relying on verbal instruction.

Recognised industry-standard safety measures could and should have been implemented on a number of machines, instead of allowing substandard conditions to persist over a prolonged period.

HSE has detailed guidance on the safe use of work equipment and machinery guarding, including the requirements under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER), which is available at: [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) – HSE](#)

Stanley Wire Limited, of Stanley Mills, Talbot Road, Penistone, South Yorkshire, after pleading guilty at an early hearing of breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £140,000 and ordered to pay £6,652 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector Charlotte Bligh said:

“Following the incident, eight Prohibition Notices were served on the company. The remedial action taken demonstrated that appropriate measures, such as effective guarding, were readily available and could have been put in place had the risks associated with the activity been properly considered.

“Companies are reminded that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required health and safety standards.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Matthew Reynolds and paralegal officer, Benjamin Stobbart.

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: [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) – HSE](#)
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed.