

Company fined after worker contracts blood infection

A company has been fined after an employee became seriously ill when he contracted a blood infection while working at a lake contaminated with sewage.

He was working for Adler and Allan Ltd, a supplier of environmental risk services, during a clean-up operation at a lake near Churchbridge, Cannock, Staffordshire, in June 2019.

Dead fish had to be cleaned out of the lake after it was contaminated with sewage when a nearby pipe burst.

The employee worked at the lake for two weeks before contracting Leptospirosis (Weil's Disease) and became seriously ill.

The infection led to the man having a rash across his whole body meaning he had to limit contact with his family. His kidney and liver also had to be monitored. He was given antibiotics and did not make a full recovery for around four months.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found there was a serious risk of ill health to employees at the site as there were inadequate hygiene provisions in place to suitably guard against bacteriological and pathogen infection.

During around the first two weeks of the job, there were [no on-site toilets or welfare units available to the company's employees](#). This led to workers using a local supermarket to wash and go to the toilet.

There was also a lack of supervision at the site, with the company also failing to conduct a suitable risk assessment and implement an appropriate system of work.

Adler and Allan Limited of Station Parade, Harrogate, Yorkshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety Act 1974 and Regulation 20(1) of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. The company were fined £126,100 and ordered to pay costs of £43,494 at Cannock Magistrates' Court on 29 November 2022

HSE inspector Lyn Mizen said: "This serious ill health matter could have been avoided if the clearly foreseeable risks and dangers had been appropriately controlled and managed, right from the outset.

"Portable welfare units can be easily sourced and are clearly needed for heavily contaminated work situations such as this.

"HSE will not hesitate to hold duty holders to account if they fall short of appropriate welfare standards."

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. HSE guidance about the provision of welfare facilities in workplaces can be accessed here – [Welfare at work – Guidance for employers on welfare provisions \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk/welfare)
3. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>