

Doncaster engineering company fined after worker diagnosed with occupational asthma

Lantern Engineering Ltd was sentenced for health breaches after workers were exposed to metal working fluid (MWF). MWF is hazardous to health, and exposure can cause health conditions including irritation of the skin/dermatitis, occupational asthma, bronchitis and irritation of the upper respiratory tract.

Sheffield Magistrates' Court heard that, in February 2016 a visit was conducted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and enforcement taken requiring the company to provide health surveillance and manage MWF. In September 2016 an employee was diagnosed with occupational asthma. Further enforcement was taken in December 2016 with an Improvement Notice issued to develop a system for managing MWF.

An investigation by HSE found that a water mix MWF was in use in the majority of machines including saws, machine centres and milling machines. None of these machines had local exhaust ventilation (LEV) and some door seals were observed to be in poor condition. The MWF sumps to some machines were in visibly poor condition, with fines, swarf and/or tramp oil being present.

Lantern Engineering Ltd of Globe Court, Denby, Doncaster South Yorkshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company has been fined £15,000 and ordered to pay £7,500 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Laura Hunter commented: "The company's failure to manage MWF exposed employees to risk.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required 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^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: 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:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/metalworking/about.htm>