

Fine for chemical company after worker suffers burns

- Worker suffered burns from a steam hose.
- HSE investigation found steam hose wasn't safe.
- Company had no understanding of risks involved.

A chemical company has been fined £100,000 after one of its workers was permanently scarred from burns from a steam hose at a site in Motherwell.

A 23-year-old was burnt across his back and other areas of his body as he attempted to clean a process water tank on 23 October 2019. At the time he had been working for Dundas Chemical Company (Mosspark) Limited at its site at Omoa Works in Newarthill for around two years.

The company operates a large rendering plant that processes animal waste and food industry waste to produce proteins, fats and oils used in the oleo chemical, fuel, and feed industries. As a result of this process, the water tank and vickery would need occasional cleaning. The process water tank is shown in the image below:



It was during a nightshift that the man had been instructed to undertake cleaning duties on the process water tank, the vickery and the walls and floors in that area. The company provided pressure washers as well as a steam hose for cleaning down difficult areas where there may be tallow or other animal residues.

The steam hose was heavy and cumbersome to manoeuvre, with the uninsulated nozzle also becoming hot.. The man and a colleague therefore took it in turns to carry out the steam hose task.

After a period of time they stopped to have a break. While his colleague then went on to carry out other duties, the 23-year-old proceeded to finish the

cleaning on his own.

He did this with the aid of a small cherry picker – attaching the steam hose to its basket. After the basket had been raised to the required height, the steam hose and nozzle spun round and steam began flowing into the cherry picker basket directly at him. He quickly turned his back to prevent his face being burned, while manipulating the nozzle of the hose away from him and lowering the basket of the cherry picker, at which point he was then able to run through to one of the deluge showers to cool his burn injuries. He was taken to hospital with steam burns to several parts of his body, which have left scars to this day.



The vickery at the site

An investigation carried out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the nozzle fitted to the steam hose was unsafe as it did not have a trigger or other mechanism fitted to allow the operator to start or stop the flow out of the nozzle at the point of operation. It also found that the mixing valve and set-up for supplying hot water for cleaning purposes was not maintained in an efficient working order or in good repair. Supervisors at the site were aware that the mixing valve was passing steam, however no action was taken to investigate the issue or prevent it from happening.

HSE inspectors also found the maintenance and engineering team had no sound engineering understanding of the risks involved when setting up such a washdown system and how to mitigate or control those risks. The company provided information to HSE that there were no records associated with the maintenance of the valve, hose or nozzle.

Dundas Chemical Company (Mosspark) Limited, of Mosspark, Brasswell, Dumfries, pleaded guilty to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. It was fined £100,000 at Hamilton Sheriff Court on 18 August 2025.

HSE inspector Ashley Fallis said: “Had a safe system of work been in place then this incident would not have happened.

“The lack of appropriate risk assessment, method statements, training and

supervision for both the maintenance team who installed the valve, and the operators tasked with using the system, led to a situation where those involved were unaware of risks or simple control measures.

“This catalogue of failures resulted in a young man sustaining very serious burns, to which he still bears the scars to this day.

“We will not hesitate to take action against companies that fail to protect their employees.”

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. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).