

Forge company fined after worker killed

A hot metal forging company has today been sentenced for safety breaches following the death of a worker.

Sheffield Crown Court heard how, on 17 July 2015, Billy Fairweather, 35, was tasked with hammering down pieces of hard alloy in a team of four. One of the pieces Mr Fairweather was working on was small but still hard alloy so he moved from the small hammer he had been assigned to a more powerful one.

Due to the small size of the work piece and the large size of the hammer, it was necessary for Mr Fairweather to be positioned low down and close to the hammer, down on one knee or in a kneeling position. The piece he was working on misaligned and was ejected – it threw Mr Fairweather backwards, leading to, fatal injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to allocate the job to the correct hammer and crew, and failed to properly assess the risks involved with hammering small components on large hammers. The investigation also found the company failed to provide a safe system of work that considered communication and which allowed line of sight of the work piece.

Abbey Forged Products Ltd, of Beeley wood Lane, Sheffield, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £500,000 with £23,756.47 cost.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Carol Downes commented: “This tragic incident could easily have been prevented if the employer had acted to identify and manage the risks involved, put a safe system of work in place, and to ensure that the job was allocated to the appropriate equipment.

“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
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>