

Company fined after teenage apprentice overcome by fumes

An alloy wheel refurbishment company was sentenced after a 16-year-old apprentice worker was overcome by vapours from a chemical used in the stripping and cleaning of alloy wheels.

South Tyneside Magistrates' Court heard how, on 12 December 2017, the employee of Wheelnut Ltd, entered an area of the company's former premises in Swalwell, Newcastle upon Tyne, known as the "acid room". The employee entered the room to retrieve alloy wheels from one of three barrels of a chemical substance containing Dichloromethane (DCM), Methanol and Hydrofluoric Acid used in the stripping process. He was subsequently found by a colleague slumped unconscious over a barrel.





An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found a risk assessment for the chemical wheel stripping process was not suitable or sufficient. Appropriate control measures should have included suitable exhaust ventilation in the room as well as respiratory protective equipment (RPE) for the employees. RPE was provided but it was not maintained in an efficient or effective state. Several parts of it were damaged and the air feed to it from the compressor was not filtered correctly. The investigation found that on this occasion, and previously, the employee was not wearing the RPE when he entered the room. Employees were not provided with suitable and sufficient information, instruction, and training with regards to the risks involved with using the chemicals, particularly the risks involved with using DCM.

Wheelnut Ltd of Whickham Bank, Swalwell, Newcastle upon pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £32,000 and ordered to pay full costs of £1718.50.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Joy Craighead said: "A young worker suffered a potentially serious injury. Breathing in DCM vapour can produce narcotic effects and, at high concentrations, unconsciousness and death. In this instance, the boy made a full recovery, but it could have easily resulted in his death."

For more information on this, please visit:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis19.pdf>

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. www.hse.gov.uk

2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

The post [Company fined after teenage apprentice overcome by fumes](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[HSE releases annual workplace fatality figures](#)

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has today released [its annual figures for work-related fatal injuries for 2018/19](#) as well as the number of people known to have died from the asbestos-related cancer, [mesothelioma](#), in 2017.

The provisional annual data for work-related fatal injuries revealed that 147 workers were fatally injured between April 2018 and March 2019 (a rate of 0.45 per 100,000 workers).

There has been a long-term reduction in the number of fatalities since 1981. Although 2018/19 saw an increase of 6 workplace fatalities from 2017/18, the number has remained broadly level in recent years.

Following the release, HSE Chair Martin Temple commented:

"Today's release of workplace fatality statistics is a reminder that despite the UK's world leading position in health and safety, we cannot become complacent as we seek to fulfil our mission in preventing injury, ill health and death at work."

The new figures show how fatal injuries are spread across the different industrial sectors:

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing, and Construction sectors continue to account for the largest share of fatal injuries to workers (32 and 30 deaths respectively in 2018/19).

The figures also indicate those sectors where the risk of fatal injury is greatest:

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing and Waste and recycling are the worst affected sectors, with a rate of fatal injury some 18 times and 17 times as high as the average across all industries respectively (annual average rates for 2014/15-2018/19).

HSE Chair Martin Temple commented:

“These statistics also remind us that, in certain sectors of the economy, workplace death remain worryingly high. Agriculture, forestry and fishing accounts for a small fraction of the workforce of Great Britain, yet accounted for over 20 per cent of worker fatalities in the last year. This is unacceptable and more must be done to prevent such fatalities taking place.”

“Whatever the sector, we should remember that any change in numbers provides little comfort to the family, friends and colleagues of the 147 whose lives were cut short this year while doing their job.”

The three most common causes of fatal injuries continue to be; workers falling from height (40), being struck by a moving vehicle (30) and being struck by a moving object (16), accounting for nearly 60 per cent of fatal injuries in 2018/19.

The new figures continued to highlight the risks to older workers; 25 per cent of fatal injuries in 2018/19 were to workers aged 60 or over, even though such workers made up only around 10 per cent of the workforce.

In addition, there were also 92 members of the public fatally injured in incidents connected to work in 2018/2019, approximately a third of which took place on railways.

Mesothelioma, which is contracted through past exposure to asbestos and is one of the few work-related diseases where deaths can be counted directly, killed 2,523 in Great Britain in 2017- a broadly similar number to the previous five years. The current figures are largely a consequence of occupational asbestos exposures that occurred before 1980. Annual deaths are expected to remain broadly at current levels for the rest of the decade before beginning to reduce in number.

A fuller assessment of work-related ill-health and injuries, drawing on HSE's full range of data sources, will be provided as part of the annual Health and Safety Statistics release on 30 October 2019.

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2. Further information on the annual statistical releases can be found here:

1. Work-related fatal injuries:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/fatals.htm>

2. Mesothelioma:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/mesothelioma/mesothelioma.pdf>

3. [Latest HSE press releases](#).

The post [HSE releases annual workplace fatality figures](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

Wood product manufacturer fined after worker suffers life changing injuries to face

A St Helens wood product manufacturer and a company director have been fined after a worker was dragged into a rotating drive shaft at their site at Normans Road, Sutton, St Helens.

Liverpool Magistrates Court heard how, on the 30 June 2016, an agency worker had been working on a production line making parts for staircases when her hair caught on a rotating drive shaft, resulting in the loss of her full scalp, ears and one of her thumbs. She suffered severe physical and mental trauma and has undergone numerous reconstructive operations and has been unable to return to work since the incident.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to adequately guard the production line, allowing access to dangerous parts of machinery, including conveyors and drive shafts, by employees and agency workers, during both operation and cleaning.

A return visit was made in April 2018 where it was discovered that the company had changed the layout of the production line, leaving accessible dangerous parts, including an identical shaft to the one which the victim was injured on. A Prohibition Notice and an Improvement Notice were served to address the risks.

The subsequent investigation showed that mill operatives were regularly accessing the strapping section while the machinery was still running, and the Production Director was aware of this.

Cheshire Mouldings and Woodturning Limited of Unit 7, Normans Road, Sutton, St Helens pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £466,666 and ordered to

pay costs of £7,475.90 and a victim surcharge of £170.

Paul Carney of Springburn Gardens, Woolston, Warrington pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £10,800, ordered to pay £43,241 in costs and £170 victim surcharge.

After the hearing HSE Principal Inspector Helen Jones said: "This incident, which was easily preventable, has had a devastating impact on the victim involved and those close to her. The company failed to prevent employees accessing dangerous moving parts of machinery. Had they ensured the machine was adequately guarded employees would not have been able to access moving parts and this tragic accident would have been avoided."

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The post [Wood product manufacturer fined after worker suffers life changing injuries to face](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

Construction company fined after worker injured in fall from height

A Sheffield construction company has been sentenced for safety breaches after a self-employed general builder fell seven metres onto a concrete floor at a site in Sheffield.

Sheffield Magistrates' Court heard how, on 11 April 2018, the builder was working for and under the control of Clear Property Solutions (SY) Limited. He had just finished installing a flat rubber roof on a dormer extension at the rear of the domestic property in Abbeydale Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire. He was exiting the flat roof onto a scaffold using an untied unsecured folding ladder when the ladder slipped, and he fell onto the concrete floor below.

The 34-year-old builder sustained shattered heels and a fractured skull resulting in swelling and bleeding on the brain following this incident.



An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Clear Property Solutions (SY) Ltd had not completed any risk assessments or method statements or construction phase plan for this works. Operatives on the site were also not trained in work at height.

Clear Property Solutions (SY) Limited of John Street, Sheffield pleaded guilty to contravening Regulation 6 (3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company has been fined £30,000 and ordered to pay £1302.60 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Stuart Whitesmith commented: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"In this case the builder suffered life-threatening injuries which could have been avoided by installing guardrails around the perimeter of the flat roof, with a gate and secured ladder access."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ ^[2]Please see the link to the page on HSE's website that is the best guide to doing it the right way :www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg33.htm www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg284.pdf
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>^[3]

The post [Construction company fined after worker injured in fall from height](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Demolition company fined after nearby worker injured](#)

G O'Brien & Sons (Nationwide Demolition Contractors) Limited has been fined after a nearby worker was seriously injured on a demolition site in Durham.

Newton Aycliffe Magistrates' Court heard that on 22 February 2018 the company was demolishing two semi-detached properties as part of a project to renovate a residential street. The injured person, the director of a loss assessor company, had attended his client's property adjacent to where the work was taking place. Demolition waste had spread into the garden of the neighbouring property, and the injured person stood on a broken window panel, cutting through his ankle and Achilles tendon, whilst attempting to take photographs of the waste.

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An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company failed to suitably ensure that demolition work within its grounds was carried out in such a manner as to prevent danger. The work had not been thoroughly planned to ensure that demolition waste was fully enclosed within the site boundary, and there was no secure fence to prevent unauthorised access to the site.

G O'Brien & Sons (Nationwide Demolition Contractors) Limited of Durham Road, Birtley was found guilty of breaching Regulation 20(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The company was fined £3,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1419.40.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Phil Chester said, "An important message to the industry is to suitably plan work and ensure that site documentation is followed throughout the duration of the work. Paperwork and planning are not just a tick box exercise."

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