

# Hydraulics company fined after worker's legs trapped in machine

A hydraulics company, with locations throughout the UK, has been fined after an employee became trapped in a machine that he was working on at a customer's premises in Plymouth.

David Lawrence, a 63-year-old engineer, was undertaking fault finding on a laser cutting machine for Pearson Hydraulics Ltd, on 26 July 2023, when the cutting bed of the machine dropped and trapped both of his legs. After spending five weeks in hospital, Mr Lawrence had to have his right leg amputated above the knee. Despite extensive surgery to save his left leg, Mr Lawrence faces the possibility of having it amputated in the future.



David Lawrence suffered life-changing injuries when the machinery trapped both of his legs

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Pearson Hydraulics Ltd did not have a safe system of work in place for maintenance activities carried out by its engineers at its customer's premises. It failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the work to be undertaken by Mr Lawrence and there had been a total failure to monitor and supervise his work. The investigation also identified that Mr Lawrence had not been adequately trained by his employer and that his knowledge of hydraulic systems on laser cutting machinery was inadequate, preventing him from carrying out the work safely.

HSE guidance stresses that it is important these situations are properly assessed. Workers carrying out maintenance activities may need to undertake significant regular risk assessment (as the situation may develop and change in ways that could not be foreseen at the outset. Further information can be found [here](#).

Pearson Hydraulics Ltd of Electric Avenue, Witham St Hughes, Lincoln pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £96,333 and ordered to pay £10,701 in costs at Plymouth Magistrates' Court on 13 March 2025.

HSE inspector Emma O'Hara said "This incident could so easily have been avoided with the correct risk assessment and implementation of a safe working procedure. Pearson Hydraulics Ltd left its employees to work out their own methods of completing fault finding and maintenance tasks, instead of providing them with suitable training and supervision so it could be done safely every time."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Andrew Siddall and paralegal officer Imogen Isaac with counsel Alan Fuller.

#### **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 guidance about [maintaining machinery](#) is available.
5. 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](#).