

Machine manufacturer fined £10,000 after lathe incident leaves employee with finger amputated

- Employee lost finger when glove caught in metalworking lathe while using emery cloth
- Company failed to assess risks and ensure safe system of work
- HSE guidance states emery cloth should never be applied directly by hand

A machine manufacturing company in Middleton has been fined after an employee lost their finger and required amputation when it became caught in emery cloth used on a metal-working lathe.

On 26 April 2024, an employee was using emery cloth to polish metal work pieces when his glove was drawn into the lathe he was operating.

Following the incident, the employee had a finger on his right hand amputated. He was unable to return to his profession as a turner and was made redundant from Carter Brothers in January 2025.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Carter Brothers failed to adequately assess the risk to employees undertaking polishing of work pieces using emery cloths and failed to ensure a safe system of work.

HSE provides guidance [using emery cloth on metalworking lathes](#). Guidance states that emery cloth should never be applied directly by hand to work rotating in a lathe. Acceptable methods include using the tool post as a clamp or a dedicated holding device, both of which reduce the risk of injury.

Carter Brothers International Limited, of Unit 30 Finlan Road, Stakehill Industrial Estate, Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £3,758.55 in costs with a victim surcharge of £2000 at Manchester Magistrates' Court on 9 February 2026.

HSE Inspector Leanne Ratcliffe said:

"This incident not only left the employee with a life-altering injury, but also meant they could not continue working in their chosen profession.

"The risks associated with using emery cloth on metalworking lathes are widely known. The company should have introduced measures to carry out polishing safely and today's fine reflects their failure to properly follow health and safety guidance

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski and

paralegal officer Benjamin Stobbart.

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](#) are available.
4. Relevant guidance can be found here [Using emery cloth on metalworking lathes](#) and [EIS2: The use of emery cloth on metalworking lathes](#)
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](#).