

Manufacturer fined after employee injured on lathe

A Lancashire manufacturer was fined after an employee was pulled into a metalworking lathe whilst applying emery cloth by hand.

Sefton Magistrates' Court heard that on 8 February 2019, Stephen Blackburn, an employee of Blackstar Handling Systems Limited was applying emery cloth by hand to a lathe to smooth down a pre-fabricated shaft, at the company's site in Skelmersdale. His arm was pulled into the machine, sustaining an open fracture, resulting in numerous surgeries including skin grafts.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Blackstar Handling Systems Limited had not recognised that the unsafe method of using hand held emery cloth on lathes was custom and practice among their employees. The company failed to provide a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and so did not identify and put in place control measures, or provide training in an alternative safe method of working, such as using a suitable tool post to handle emery cloth.

Blackstar Handling Systems Limited of Douglas Bank House, Wigan Lane, Lancashire, pleaded guilty of breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3689.60

HSE inspector Catherine Lyon said after the hearing "This injury was easily preventable, and the risk should have been identified.

"Employers should make sure they properly assess and apply effective control measures to minimise the risk from dangerous parts of machinery."

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. More information about the use of emery cloth on metalworking lathes can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/engineering/lathes.htm>
4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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