

Manufacturer sentenced after a sawmill worker lost his leg following an accident at work

- Worker had one leg amputated below the knee and sustained significant injuries to the other
- Major injury rate for sawmilling is over two and a half times that of general manufacturing
- Free guidance is available, developed in collaboration with HSE and the sawmill industry.

A large wood manufacturer in Shropshire has been fined £160,000 after an employee sustained life-changing injuries when working at their Ellesmere premises.

Robert Stubbs, 37, sustained life-changing injuries when clearing a jammed log on a machine in May 2021. Mr Stubbs climbed onto a stationary conveyor bed and used a metal pole to move a log. The conveyor started to move unexpectedly, dragging his legs across the moving chains and trapping them against a stop plate. Subsequently Mr Stubbs had his right leg amputated below the knee and sustained significant injuries to his left leg.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that E.T.C. Sawmills Limited failed to adequately assess the risks and devise and implement effective measures to prevent access to the dangerous moving parts of the Quad Saw machine or to stop the movement of the dangerous parts before people entered the danger zones. Additionally, the company failed to provide employees with safe systems of work or suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable safe operation of the machine.



ETC Sawmills Factory

Although standards of health and safety are much improved over recent years, sawmilling remains a high-risk industry with a major injury rate that is over two and a half times that of general manufacturing.

Machinery accidents remain one of the major causes of injury, with lock-out procedures for interrupting mechanised production processes still being a problem area. There is also an average of one fatality every year. HSE sawmill guidance is available to read at [Health and safety in sawmilling – HSE](#).

E.T.C. Sawmills Limited, 281 Penarth Road, Cardiff, CF11 8YF, pleaded guilty to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £160,000 and ordered to pay costs of £7,395.51 at Kidderminster magistrates court on Tuesday 9 December.

HSE Inspector Keeley Eves said: “E.T.C Sawmills is one of the largest manufacturers of softwoods for the fencing and pallet industries in England.

“The life-changing injuries sustained by Mr Stubbs could easily have been prevented if the company had acted to identify and manage the risks involved, put a safe system of work in place and ensured that employees were appropriately trained and supervised.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE senior enforcement lawyer, Nathan

Cook and paralegal, Sarah Thomas.

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. Relevant guidance can be found here: [Health and safety in sawmilling – HSE](#)
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](#).