

# Plastics manufacturer fined after employee was injured by machinery

A plastics manufacturer, who specialises in the manufacturing of traffic barriers and cones, has been fined after an employee's finger was severed due to inadequately guarded machinery.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how, on 5 November 2018, the 36-year-old employee of Melba Products Limited had been refilling the hopper of a blow moulding machine with plastic granules from bags at their site on Manchester Road, Bury. Work gloves that had been inside one of the bags fell into the hopper and through the guard. Whilst reaching through a large gap in the top of the hopper guard to retrieve the gloves, his middle finger contacted dangerous parts of the blender resulting in it being severed down to the knuckle of his second finger.



An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the blender had not been sufficiently guarded to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery. There was a large gap of approximately 4 x 5 inches towards the top of the hopper guard. The injured employee had only been operating the machine for one week prior to the incident.

Melba Products Limited failed to carry out a risk assessment of the blender, to put in place appropriate control measures to prevent access to dangerous parts and to implement a suitable system of training and supervising of new starters.

Melba Products Limited of Bury, pleaded guilty of breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £125,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,387.

HSE inspector Alex McFarland said after the hearing: "This injury was entirely preventable and could have been avoided by ensuring the machine was

being operated safely, with a suitable guard in place. Adequate supervision should also have been in place to ensure the machine was being used safely by newer operatives.

“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](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)
3. More information about safe use of machinery can be found at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/machinery/safety.htm>
4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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