[Retailer and electrical contracting company fined after electrician sustains serious burns in warehouse explosion](#)

A retail company and an electrical contracting company have been fined after an electrician suffered serious burns to 15 per cent of his body when he was caught in an explosion at a warehouse in Liverpool.

On 22 September 2018, an electrician was using a metal spanner to repair an electrical fault at B&M Retail Ltd warehouse, in Speke. The spanner he was using came into contact with a live busbar (metallic strip) linked to the power distribution causing an electrical explosion.

The 35-year-old electrician sustained serious injuries which included burns to his arms, hands, thighs, legs, and face. He was placed in an induced coma for two weeks and had to undergo several skin grafts..As a result of the incident the electrician was unable to work for five months.

The victim said: "I am very conscious of the scars and always think people are staring at me or talking about me behind my back.

"To me, my arms look like Freddy Kruger's from Nightmare on Elm Street.

"I now can't play with my little boys as much as I used to and I'm worried about hurting myself, and they are worried about hurting me. I have paranoia of being touched.

"I do worry about the future as I know the pain will never go away and might get worse, leaving me unable to work and support my family."

A HSE investigation found that the victim, who was employed by Daker Ltd, had been attempting to connect a generator to B&M's Low Voltage supply in order to allow B&M to operate some of its core site functions whilst high voltage maintenance was being undertaken. This work was complex involving several contractors and required co-ordination of different working parties with specific time limited requirements. There was insufficient planning between parties beforehand including who was in charge of each site, coordination of work and exchange of relevant documentation.

B&M failed to appoint a suitably competent person to plan and carry out the work to connect temporary generators to their distribution board at the premises

Electrical contractors Daker Ltd.'s work methods fell well below the required standards. Electrical work commenced without proper planning. The power supply to the circuit was not stopped prior to the incident and live working was allowed to take place, this meant that the power supply could be switched

on or off at any point, putting workers at risk of electric shock.

B&M Retail Ltd of The Vault, Dakota Drive, Estuary Commerce Park, Speke, Liverpool pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) and Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. At Liverpool Crown Court, the company was fined £1,000,000 and ordered to pay costs of ££4,978 .

Daker Ltd of Stewart House of Tonge Moor Road, Bolton pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £100

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Roger Clarke said: "This incident has had life-changing consequences on the victim and his family.

"It could have been avoided if the companies involved had taken the time to appropriately plan and coordinate tasks to ensure the circuit was dead, eliminating the risk of electrocution to workers.

"Working with electricity is a high-risk activity and safety must be a priority."

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:

[The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. Guidance on Regulations (hse.gov.uk)](hse.gov.uk)

[Electricity at work: Safe working practices HSG85 (hse.gov.uk)](hse.gov.uk)

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