

Suffolk meat producer fined after worker loses finger

- Company's own procedures on meat cutting were not followed
- Training only provided in English despite multi-national workforce

A Suffolk-based meat producer has been fined £140,000 after one of its workers lost part of his finger while cutting a pig tail.

The man had been working for pork producer C & K Meats Limited at its site in Potash Lane on Mid Suffolk Business Park on 12 April 2022. The Ukrainian national, who was 31 at the time, had been instructed to remove pigs' tails using hydraulic cutters, which were not designed for the task.



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However, he caught his left index finger in the cutting mechanism and severed it. He was taken to hospital where he received further treatment including the removal of more of his finger.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company failed to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees by providing equipment that was not suitable for the task.

Internal procedures were in place which identified hydraulic cutters were only to be used to remove pigs' legs and that trained butchers would undertake the removal of pigs' tails with a knife. However, the company failed to implement them.



The company failed to implement its own procedures

Training provided for the process of removing pigs' tails was also only provided in English, including for migrant workers for whom English may not have been their first language.

Employers have a legal responsibility to provide information, instruction, training and supervision in an understandable format for all workers, irrespective of their national origins, first language, or literacy. You can read more about HSE guidance for the food and drink industry here: [Food and drink industry case studies – HSE](#).

C & K Meats Limited of Oak House Heyford Close, Aldermans Green Industrial Estate, Coventry, England, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £140,000 and ordered to pay £5,513.47 in costs at Peterborough Magistrates' Court on Friday 20 June 2025.

HSE inspector Jessica Flint said: "This case identified multiple failures by this company while undertaking the very common task of pork processing.

"Trained butchers on site could have safely removed pigs' tails using a knife, instead of operatives being instructed to use unsuitable hydraulic cutters."

"The food industry should protect all its staff. This includes its more vulnerable workers, by ensuring clearly understandable training, instruction and information is provided, including to non-English speakers, and that only the most suitable equipment is used for its processes."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Samantha Crockett and paralegal officer Melissa Wardle.

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. 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 in England can be found [here](#) and those for Scotland [here](#).