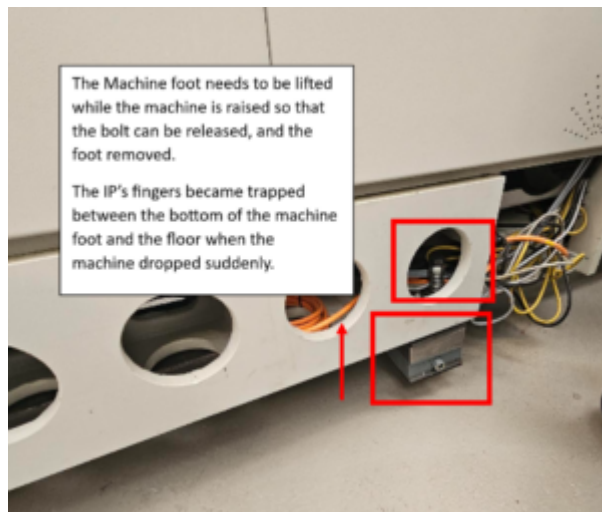


Machine manufacturing company fined after employee's fingers crushed during lifting operation

- Employee suffered serious injuries after hand became trapped beneath three-tonne machine during lifting operation.
- HSE investigation found lifting operation had not been properly planned or carried out safely.
- Worker later underwent surgery to amputate two damaged fingers.

A machine manufacturing company in Shepshed, Leicestershire has been fined £170,000 after an employee's fingers were crushed when his hand became trapped beneath a machine during a lifting operation.



An experienced machine tool fitter was working for Winbro Group Technologies Ltd at its manufacturing site in Shepshed on 17 January 2024 when his right hand became trapped beneath the foot of a three-tonne machine during a lifting operation involving a forklift truck.

The worker's hand was underneath the machine when an unintended action caused the forklift truck's forks to drop to the floor. The machine was lifted to release his hand and, following medical treatment, two of the worker's damaged fingers were amputated in hospital.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Winbro Group Technologies Ltd had failed to ensure the lifting operation involving the forklift truck was properly planned and carried out in a safe manner.

HSE guidance states that where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid people working beneath suspended loads, employers should establish safe systems of work to minimise the risk. This includes ensuring loads are properly secured. Further guidance can be found here: [Planning and organising lifting operations – HSE.](#)

Winbro Group Technologies Ltd, of Illuma House, Unit 1, Gelders Hall Road, Shepshed, Leicestershire, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 8(1) of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998. The company was fined £170,000 and ordered to pay full prosecution costs of £7,999, along with a victim surcharge of £2,000, at Leicester Magistrates' Court on 12 May 2026.

HSE Inspector Rebecca Whiley said:

“Every year, a significant proportion of accidents, many of them serious and sometimes fatal, occur as a result of poorly planned lifting operations.

“This was a wholly avoidable incident caused by a lack of planning. HSE will not hesitate to take action against dutyholders who fail to do all that they should to keep people safe.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by enforcement lawyer Neenu Bains and paralegal officer Hannah Snelling.

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: [Planning and organising lifting operations – 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](#).

[Chemical company fined £3.8 million after investigation into serious chemical burns suffered by two employees](#)

- HSE investigation found clear failings leading to two separate incidents of exposure to caustic soda at Essex-based manufacturer.
- Employee lost part of their leg in 2019 incident after stepping in puddle of caustic soda at West Thurrock site.

- In 2022 a second worker needed skin grafts after suffering burns while decanting caustic soda at Grays site.

Industrial Chemicals Limited (ICL), a chemical manufacturing company based in Essex, has been fined £3.8 million after two employees at two separate sites suffered serious chemical burns as a result of exposure to sodium hydroxide, known as caustic soda.

In the most serious incident, an employee lost his leg below the knee. In the second, another employee sustained burns requiring skin grafts to heal.

Across both sites, HSE found a consistent failure to properly assess and control the risks associated with handling and containing hazardous substances.

First incident – West Thurrock, 6 December 2019

Michael Bartholomew, now 60, a father of two and grandfather of seven from Grays in Essex, was working as a chemical loader at ICL's site at Old Power Station, Stoneness Road, West Thurrock when he stepped into a puddle of liquid suspected to contain caustic soda. The safety boots he had been provided with were not in good condition and did not provide adequate protection against the chemical – and had not been sufficiently tested against British Standards. Mr Bartholomew sustained serious burns that resulted in his leg being amputated below the knee. He has not been able to work since.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found multiple leaks of hazardous substances from pipework, valves, hoses and vessels across the site. There was no suitable system for the inspection, maintenance and testing of pipework and equipment to prevent or reduce the likelihood of leaks in the area where Mr Bartholomew was walking. Systems of work did not account for spillages, there were inadequate controls for clearing them up, the ground around the boiler house was unmade – enabling puddles to accumulate – and there were insufficient designated or enforced walkways to direct workers safely across the site.

In a Victim Personal Statement following the amputation, Mr Bartholomew said:

“I felt that this was game over for me. I would not be able to work or support my family. I miss my work and my work colleagues.

“Losing my independence and work is a huge loss and I feel I have gone through a grieving process as my work life was such an important and integral part of my life.

“I used to go to track days and drive different cars, I cannot do any of these things anymore...I used to take my grandchildren out fishing, I used to play football with them in my back garden, I can't do any of these things with them anymore.”



A safety boot Mr Bartholomew was wearing when he received the injury

Second incident – Titan Works, Grays, 30 August 2022

At ICL's Titan Works site on Hogg Lane, Grays (now closed), an employee was manually decanting caustic soda at 50% concentration using a hose into 25-litre containers, in order to top up intermediate bulk containers (IBCs) to the required concentration. After completing the task three times, he noticed that drips from the hose had fallen onto his foot, causing burns that later required skin grafts to heal. He has since returned to work.

The HSE investigation found there was no risk assessment or documented safe system of work for this task. Investigators also found that it would have been possible to automate the process entirely by bringing back into service an existing automatic IBC dosing plant with fixed pipework and remote controls – removing the need for manual handling of caustic soda altogether. Following the incident, the use of 25-litre containers was stopped, and IBCs were instead delivered to site already mixed to the required concentration, eliminating the risk entirely.

About caustic soda

Sodium hydroxide, also known as caustic soda, is used in the manufacture of washing and cleaning products. It is a white, odourless solid at room temperature and is strongly alkaline. It has a strong corrosive action on all body tissue, causing burns and frequently deep ulceration.

HSE guidance is clear that employers must take reasonable steps to reduce workers' exposure to hazardous substances like caustic soda. The first priority is to prevent exposure altogether – for example, by changing how the work is done and making sure equipment and pipework are properly maintained.

If exposure can't be avoided, it must be properly controlled using good working practices. Personal protective equipment (PPE) should only be used as a last resort and not relied on as the main way to manage the risk.

Further guidance is available in the [Control of substances hazardous to](#)

[health \(COSHH\). The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 \(as amended\). Approved Code of Practice and guidance L5](#)

Industrial Chemicals Ltd, of Jupiter House, Warley Hill Business Park, The Drive, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3BE, pleaded guilty to two charges of breaching Regulation 7(1) of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. The company was fined £3.8 million and ordered to pay costs of £124,748 at Southwark Crown Court on 21 April 2026.



The Caustic Loading area from the ICL site

HSE Inspector Julia Gebauer said:

“This was a company operating with significant volumes of a highly corrosive material but had manifestly failed to put proper measures in place to protect their workers and prevent exposure.

“The consequence was two separate incidents at two separate sites – one of which resulted in life-altering injuries – that pointed to a pattern of avoidable risks that Industrial Chemicals Ltd could and should have prevented.

“That Mr Bartholomew didn’t have protective boots that were up to standard when he stepped in a puddle of caustic soda was only one of many failures that Industrial Chemicals Ltd have been held to account for.

“I hope the scale of the fine handed down brings some closure to the workers at the centre of this case and sends a clear message to employers that they must have proper plans in place to prevent their workers being exposed to danger.”

The HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer William Bodiam and paralegal officer Chidimma Elechi.

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 [Control of substances hazardous to health \(COSHH\). The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 \(as amended\). Approved Code of Practice and guidance L5](#)
 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](#).
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[Manufacturing firms reminded of their asbestos duties](#)

Britain's workplace regulator is reminding manufacturing firms of their asbestos duties.

As we approach Global Asbestos Awareness Week (April 1 – 7), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is reminding those running businesses occupying buildings built before 2000 to properly assess, manage and monitor asbestos risks in line with the law.

Older manufacturing facilities may house multiple asbestos containing materials (ACMs). Asbestos was widely used in buildings and in some equipment between 1950 and 1980; however, any building built or refurbished before 2000 could contain an ACM.

Asbestos can be found in: pipe lagging, insulation board, asbestos cement products such as profiled roof sheets and wall panels, floor coverings and asbestos sprayed coatings. ACMs such as gaskets and rope seals can also be found within old plant and equipment such as industrial ovens and pipework.

Asbestos exposures caused by poor planning and risk management can have substantial human costs for victims and their families. Asbestos-related diseases remain the highest cause of work-related deaths in Great Britain, these often fatal diseases, typically take decades for symptoms to occur following exposure.

There is a [legal duty to manage asbestos](#) and failing to do so can result in penalties ranging from fines to prison sentences. The implications of an asbestos incident can also be far reaching in terms of reputation, staff morale, attracting new staff and overall costs.

HSE data reveals there have been more than 100 asbestos-related prosecution cases brought in the past five years, relating to 150 breaches of the law.

Make UK, supporting the manufacturing sector and businesses around the country is supporting HSE's call. Chris Newson CFIOSH, Environment Health and Safety Director, said he was happy Make UK was fully behind the HSE's "[Asbestos – Your Duty](#)" campaign.

"The number of people affected each year by this deadly material within UK manufacturing is still far higher than it need be," he said.

"It is important that all dutyholders within our sector are aware of their duties and the excellent resources made freely available by HSE to help them meet their legal requirements."

The risks associated with asbestos-containing materials are well known and free advice and resources are available from the [HSE's website](#).

As the regulator's campaign continues, HSE Head of Manufacturing Sector, David Butter reminded those responsible that asbestos wasn't just a problem of the past.

"It can still be found in a wide variety of materials in factories and manufacturing premises," they said.

"Dutyholders must identify, assess and manage asbestos in their buildings to keep people safe."

There are six steps for how those responsible can comply with their legal duty:

1. Find out if asbestos could be present in your building.
1. Arrange an asbestos survey by a competent person or accredited surveyor.
1. Make a register and assess the risks from your asbestos.
1. Write your asbestos management plan.
1. Put your plan into action.
1. Continually monitor and communicate the plan.

David went on to say: "Employers should not undertake any work with asbestos materials, which exposes their employees, unless the risks have been assessed and appropriate control measures have been implemented.

"Some types of work associated with asbestos materials may only be undertaken by a suitably licensed asbestos contractor under stringent procedures.

"As well as being a legal duty, it is simply common sense and good business to ensure rigorous managing and monitoring of asbestos."

Further information:

For further information on asbestos-related disease statistics visit: [Asbestosis, mesothelioma, asbestos related lung cancer and non-malignant pleural disease in Great Britain 2024](#)

Manufacturer fined £100,000 after worker partially severs two fingers

A Welshpool manufacturing company has been fined £100,000 after one of its employees partially severed two fingers while trying to find a fault in a machine.

Interior Products Group Limited (known as Newmor Group Ltd at the time of the incident) manufacture and sell pre-finished fit out products to a variety of sectors.

The experienced employee, from Wrexham, was attempting [to identify a fault in an edgebander machine](#) – used to apply edging tape to the raw edges of wood panels with a hot-melt adhesive or glue.

Wrexham Magistrates' Court heard how the experienced employee suffered the injuries while checking for debris on the trimming unit of the edgebander. Having failed to turn the machine off correctly before raising it to look inside, the worker then stepped over two supporting rails and placed their fingers on a trimming unit, resulting in two being partially severed.

Following an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), it was discovered that although the company had carried out a number of risk assessments on the machine, they failed to identify the hazards presented by the cutting and trimming units from the front of the edgebander. They also failed to provide suitable and sufficient, information, instruction and training to enable their staff to carry out activities such as cleaning, fault finding and minor repairs safely.

Interior Products Group Limited of Madocs Works, Henfaes Lane, Welshpool pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. They were fined £100,000 and ordered to pay costs of £7,688.

Speaking after the case HSE inspector Joe Boast said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in that safe system of working.

"If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, the life changing injuries sustained by the employee could have been

prevented.”

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.
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. Guidance on [working safely with machinery](#) is available.

[Devon dad has every finger amputated after hands crushed in machine](#)

A dad from Devon was left with horrific injuries to his hands after an incident at his work.

Dean Delahaye, from Barnstaple, had to have all eight fingers amputated after his hands were crushed by a metal rolling machine.

The 35-year-old worked for flue and chimney manufacturer SF Limited. He was feeding flat metal sheeting into the machine when the incident took place on 5 September 2019. He spent 54 days in hospital and had numerous operations. More than three years on, he is still waiting for prosthetics to be fitted.



Dean Delahaye from Barnstaple suffered

horrific injuries at work

“I still get very frustrated and have a sense of uselessness,” he said.

“I am frustrated with how long things are taking, and how things have been put on hold.

“Having no fingers means I am unable to grip things.

“Before my accident I enjoyed playing a wide range of sports, including football, tennis and squash.

“I have always enjoyed working with my hands and have only ever had manual jobs, but since the accident it will never be possible to return to doing this again.

“Before my accident I was an independent and sociable person, but I feel this has been taken away from me now.”

Due to the severity of his injuries, Mr Delahaye went on to say how he was even unable to pick up and feed his daughter, who was born after the incident.

“It makes me feel like a burden to my loved ones, with all the assistance I need daily,” he said.

“My wife Jess not only has to care for me, but is also like a single parent which makes me feel so worthless.

“Mentally I have not come to terms with my new reality.

“When I dream, I am fully able-bodied and then I wake and realise this is never going to be the case for me again.

“But if my accident can stop someone going through what I have had to go through, then at least it will be for something.”



Dean Delahaye
said his life has
never been the
same since he
suffered horrific
injuries at work

Yeovil Magistrates Court heard that an investigation by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to adequately assess the risks and implement the necessary controls when the roller equipment was installed. They subsequently missed a further opportunity to reassess the risks following a significant change in the way in which the machine was operated.

S F Limited which trades as SFL Flue and Chimney of Pottington Business Park, Barnstaple, Devon, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. They were fined £26,000 and ordered to pay costs of £12,000.

After the hearing HSE inspector Paul Mannell said: "Dean's injuries were easily preventable.

"Employers must identify the risks posed by dangerous parts of machinery and ensure that relevant controls are implemented to minimise the potential for harm.

"Where the way in which machinery is used changes, the assessment and controls should be updated to ensure employees can work safely and without risk of injury."

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