

# Spring manufacturer sentenced after worker severs fingers

A spring manufacturing company has been fined after an employee had two fingers of his right hand severed whilst attempting to lubricate a bandsaw.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how on 2 October 2019, a labourer employed by Hanson Springs Ltd in Rochdale was assisting in the cutting back department to cut sections of steel spring using a vertical bandsaw when the blade began to smoke and squeal. The worker decided to replace the blade, as on inspection it appeared heavily worn. He attempted to lubricate the new blade, by pressing a cardboard tube of wax onto the exposed section of it whilst it ran. The tube was drawn in, in turn drawing in the worker's hand, severing the middle two fingers at the first and second knuckle respectively.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that although the worker had received training from the supervisor in using the machine, it was of poor quality, no formal competency assessment had been carried out, nor was he certain that he could use the machine unsupervised. Furthermore, despite lubrication of the blades in this manner being standard practice within the company, it was unnecessary as the machine was self-lubricating. The worker had been shown how to do this during training in order to minimise the time needed for the blade to become greased using the inbuilt lubrication system and therefore operational. Operational management was not aware of this dangerous practice and therefore no safe method of lubricating the blades had been provided.

Hanson Springs Ltd of Hanson Place, Gorrells Way, Rochdale, Lancashire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,394.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Peter Lennon said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided.

"Employers should ensure they carry out an assessment of the risks and put in safe system of works for the operation of all machinery.

"Employers should also ensure that adequate supervision, instruction and training is provided to workers."

## **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:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/machinery/safety.htm>

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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## [South Yorkshire businesses targeted for health and safety inspection](#)

- 22 inspectors dispatched to carry out inspections in Sheffield and Rotherham.
- 12 fatalities and 594 serious injuries reported in five years.
- HSE will take enforcement action if it identifies areas of concern.
- 12,000 UK workers died from occupational lung diseases in 2020

Britain's workplace regulator is set to clamp down on businesses in Sheffield and Rotherham after a sharp increase in the number of serious and fatal incidents noted by its inspectors within the last five years.

There were 12 worker deaths reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) – under the “[RIDDOR](#)” regulations – in Sheffield and Rotherham between 2014 and 2021 and a further 594 serious injuries reported over the same period. Inspection teams will primarily focus on conducting inspections on businesses where workers regularly undertake welding and use metalworking fluids, a high proportion of which are based in the area.

In 2020 around 12,000 people in the UK died from [lung diseases](#) likely to be linked to past exposure from work. There is scientific evidence to suggest that exposure to [welding](#) fumes can cause lung cancer and exposure to [metalworking fluids](#) can cause a range of lung diseases.

From today, Monday 10 January 2022, 22 inspectors from HSE's Yorkshire and North East field operations teams will visit more than 70 local business, identified by HSE's targeting and intelligence team as operating in a high risk sector or performing poorly. The businesses span a wide range of sectors including metal fabrication, engineering, general manufacturing, waste and recycling. The operation will last for a week.

Andrew Denison, Acting Head of Operations said: “It is estimated that each year 12,000 workers die in Britain from occupational lung disease and 17,000 new cases report suffering work-related breathing and lung problems. This part of South Yorkshire has a fine tradition in metal fabrication and manufacturing; we just need to ensure that the innovation continues to extend to safe working practice.

“Local inspectors have witnessed an alarming rise in the number of fatalities and injuries in the Sheffield and Rotherham area in the last five years. This initiative will ensure that inspectors are able to visit sites and speak with duty holders to ensure the appropriate controls are in place to protect their workers’ health and safety, particularly in relation to the risks from occupational lung disease. “

During the visits the companies will need to demonstrate that they have measures in place to manage risks to protect the health and well-being of their workers including health conditions such as occupational lung disease.

If an HSE inspector identifies any other areas of concern during an inspection, they will take the necessary enforcement action which in some cases may lead to an Enforcement Notice being served or, in the case of serious breaches, a prosecution.

Ends

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# Engineering company fined after worker severed finger in machinery

Royston Lead Limited have been sentenced for safety breaches after a worker's hand became trapped in a stamping machine.

Sheffield Magistrates' Court heard that, on 16 January 2018, the 21-year-old worker was feeding lead billets into a lead stamping machine when his hand became caught. The little finger on his right hand was cut to the bone and later had to be partially amputated. He also suffered cuts and subsequent scarring to the ring finger on the same hand.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the machine was inadequately guarded and there was access to dangerous parts of the machine. A second similar machine was found to have the same guarding deficiencies.

Royston Lead Limited of Pogmoor Works, Stocks Lane, Barnsley, South Yorkshire pleaded guilty to breaching two charges of Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The company has been fined £80,000 and ordered to pay £8,400 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Anuja Mistry-Raval said: "Dangerous parts of the machines should have been identified through a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks posed and then appropriately guarded.

"This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply implementing correct control measures and carrying out safe working practices"

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  3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
  4. For more information on safe use of machinery please see the following guidance:  
[Work equipment and machinery](#)  
[Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\)](#)  
[Safe use of work equipment](#)
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# HSE launches Working Minds campaign to encourage employers to promote good mental health in work

Work-related stress and poor mental health risk becoming a health and safety crisis for Great Britain's workplaces, the regulator has warned.

While the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is yet to be fully understood, mental health issues are the number one reason given for sick days in the UK. Last year more than 17 million working days were lost as a result of stress, anxiety, or depression. A recent survey by the charity Mind suggests that two in five employees' mental health had worsened during the pandemic.

In response the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is today, Tuesday 16 November, launching its new campaign, 'Working Minds', at its *Health and Work Conference*, which examines issues relating to health at work. The campaign aims to help businesses recognise the signs of work-related stress and make tackling issues routine.

While 'Working Minds' is specifically targeting six million workers in small businesses, HSE is calling for a culture change across Britain's workplaces, to ensure psychological risks are treated the same as physical ones in health and safety risk management.

HSE's chief executive Sarah Albon said: "Work-related stress and poor mental health should be treated with the same significance as risks of poor physical health and injury. In terms of the affect it has on workers, significant and long-term stress can limit performance and impact personal lives.

"No worker should suffer in silence and if we don't act now to improve workers' mental health, this could evolve into a health and safety crisis.

"The pandemic has highlighted the need to protect the health of employees who have faced unprecedented challenges; the Government is committed to building back better and we want to make sure good mental health is central to this."

HSE is reminding business that no matter where people work, employers have a legal duty to assess the risks in the workplace, not just in terms of potential hazards and physical safety. They should also promote good working practices. It says this promotes an open environment where employees can share their concerns and discuss options to ease pressures.

Sarah Albon added: "Our campaign is focused on giving employers a clear reminder of their duties while championing reducing work-related stress and promoting good mental health at work."

The regulator has partnered with a number of organisations to highlight the triggers of stress, the legal duty of employers and how to manage the risks. The network of Working Minds champions includes the charity Mind, which

supports and empowers anyone experiencing a mental health problem in England.

Working Minds is aimed specifically at supporting small businesses by providing employers and workers with easy to implement advice, including simple steps in its '5 R's' to Reach out, Recognise, Respond, Reflect, and make it Routine.

Employers and workers wanting to know more about the Working Minds campaign, including the legal obligations, advice, and tools available, should visit: [workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/workingminds](http://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/workingminds).

### **Comments in support of Working Minds**

Dane Krambergar, Head of Workplace Wellbeing Services at Mind, said: "We're really pleased to be supporting HSE's Working Minds campaign which aims to support businesses to promote good mental health among their staff. Mind has long been working with employers of different sizes and sectors to help them create mentally healthy workplaces, but this has never been more important. This campaign couldn't have come at a better time, given the impact the pandemic has taken on employers and staff.

"We recently surveyed over 40,000 staff working across 114 organisations. Two in five (41 per cent) employees told us their mental health had worsened during the pandemic."

Prof Neil Greenberg, Chair of the Occupational Psychiatry Special Interest Group at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, said: "Good mental health is just as important as good physical health, so it's vital that employers do all that they can to promote good mental health in the workplace. Employees should be given appropriate support to help minimise the likelihood of experiencing work-related mental health problems and be supported in their treatment and recovery if they do develop or live with a mental illness.

"HSE's campaign will give organisations and employers the necessary tools to spot potential signs of mental ill-health, and to develop or improve their practices to protect the psychological health of their staff."

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Chloe Smith said: "Making sure businesses have the right tools to recognise and support their employees with their mental health is key to creating healthy workforces across the country.

"Campaigns like this are so important and alongside our other measures to help reduce ill-health related job loss and initiatives such as Access to Work we can ensure even more people can stay in their job and thrive."

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2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. The Working Minds campaign is supported by Mind, Lifelines Scotland, NHS, ACAS, Mates in Mind, the Farm Safety Foundation, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Plastics and Composites Group, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Civil Engineering Contractors Association, the Federation of Small Businesses, CONIAC and the UK Home Care Association.
4. While seeking to raise awareness and seek a culture change across workplaces nationally, the campaign is specifically targeting businesses with fewer than 20 employees with a focus on Agriculture, Construction, Health, Manufacturing, Motor trade (repairs not retail) – providing an audience of 1.1m SME businesses with 2 – 19 employees, approximately six million workers in total.
5. More information on today's conference can be found [here](#).
6. Dane Kramberger, Head of Workplace Wellbeing Services at Mind, Continued: "The main reasons cited (in the survey mentioned above) including work life interfering with home life and fears about job security. Although many staff felt more comfortable talking to their employer about their mental health, too often, staff told us they were not offered any additional support or adjustments to their roles. Investing in the mental health of your staff is not only the responsible thing to do, but it saves money in terms of reduced sickness absence and turnover and increased staff morale and productivity. Employers also have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff – this includes staff whose mental health has a substantial adverse effect on their daily lives and has lasted or is expected to last more than 12 months."

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## [Polymer distribution company in court after worker's fingers severed](#)

A polymer distribution company has been fined after an employee's hand was trapped in machinery whilst attempting to remove a blockage.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how, on the 12 October 2018, an employee of Albis (UK) Ltd was filling an autoloader machine when a blockage occurred

in the chute, preventing the product from dropping into the mixer. The employee opened the mixer in order to insert their hand into the chute to remove the blockage, at which point, the butterfly valve was released. This caused the index finger of their right hand to be trapped resulting in the loss of the tip of the index finger below the first joint and the tip of his middle finger above the first joint.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), found that the company had made alterations to the roof area of the premises sometime before the incident. Due to these, the length of the chute had had to be decreased making access to dangerous parts of the machine possible. A risk assessment had not been carried out subsequent to the shortening of the chute, neither had operatives been fully instructed on how to unblock the autoloader. The machine had also been reconfigured unbeknown to the safety manager, allowing the valve to continue moving when the interlock had been broken. The machine should have cut out when the mixer lid was opened, but it failed to do so, resulting in the incident.

Albis (UK) Ltd of Montgomery Way, Parkgate Industrial Estate, Knutsford, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £33,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,684.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Martin Heywood said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided. Employers should ensure they carry out an assessment of the risks and put in safe system of works for the operation of all machinery. Employers should also ensure that adequate information, instruction and training is provided to all who use it."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [Why is machinery safety important?](#)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>