

Wood supplier hit with £40,000 for failing to protect workers from dust

- Workshop caked in dust when HSE inspected
- Guidance is available to prevent excessive exposure

A wood supplier has been fined £40,000 for failing to protect its workers from exposure to wood dust.

Fakenham-based Nat Pal Limited was visited by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in April 2023. Dust was found scattered across the floor, and the inspection identified failings in the company's control measures to prevent exposure of their employees to wood dust and enforcement action was taken.



Dust was found scattered across the floor

The HSE investigation also identified ongoing failings in the company's control measures and found that it had failed to take appropriate precautions despite previous enforcement on the same issues dating back to 2015.

Breathing in wood dust excessively can cause asthma and nasal cancer. Guidance on working in the [woodworking industry](#) is available and an [inspection-led campaign to protect workers](#) continues.

That guidance states that employers must take effective measures to prevent exposure of their employees to wood dust. This will normally be by:

- Providing and maintaining local exhaust ventilation systems;
- Having appropriate face-fit tested respiratory protection.
- Carrying out health surveillance to monitor the respiratory health of employees.



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Nat Pal Limited of Cummings Road, Tattersett Business Park, Fakenham, pleaded guilty to a charge contrary to Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act, 1974, in that it failed to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees, as it failed to manage the risks created by operating a wood-working business. The company was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,072 at a hearing at Norwich Magistrates' Court on 16 May 2025.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Natalie Prince said "The fine imposed on Nat Pal Limited should underline that HSE take a failure to protect the health of employees extremely seriously.

"To make matters worse, this company had been visited previously and had failed to take steps to protect its workers.

"We will not hesitate to take action against companies which fail to do all they can."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Rebecca Shwartz and paralegal officer Imogen Isaac.

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 guidance on working in the [woodworking industry](#) is available.
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](#).