

Woodwork company fined after persistent failure to guard and maintain equipment

Ashwell Recycled Timber Products Limited has been fined following repeated failures to safely guard and maintain woodwork equipment used by their employees.

Barkingside Magistrates' Court heard how employees had been exposed to the risk of serious injury because their radial arm drill was not fitted with an effective telescopic guard or trip device, and the housing on a re-saw blade and self-return function on their cross-cut saw had not been maintained. These failures were found despite the company having received previous enforcement action from HSE on similar issues.

Ashwell Recycled Timber Products Limited of Wick Place Farm, Bulphan, Upminster, pleaded guilty to two breaches of Regulation 5(1) and one of Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and have been fined £12,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,831.75.

Speaking after the case HSE inspector Dominic Elliss said "In this case, the company completely failed to grasp the importance of installing and maintaining basic but essential guards to prevent access to the dangerous parts of woodworking machinery.

"Companies should be aware that HSE may bring prosecutions where dutyholders continually fail to address risks in the workplace. Woodworking machinery relies on the provision and ongoing maintenance of suitable guards to prevent significant injuries occurring, and businesses should take this opportunity to review their own arrangements and ensure they are sufficiently robust."

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: www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Guidance can be found here:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis36.pdf> –
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg129.pdf>
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l114.pdf>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.