



Safetyform Monthly Newsletter - April 2021

Welcome to the latest edition of the Safetyform monthly newsletter, bringing you up to date with all the latest construction health & safety news.

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Safetyform Brochure



We are pleased to unveil our new 2021 brochure: <https://safetyform.co.uk/news/>

Please take a look, save, and share!

What's in the News?

Workers were exposed to hand-arm vibration risks



A large Telford-based foundry has been fined after a number of its workers were diagnosed with hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS).

Three employees of Saint-Gobain Construction Products UK Limited, the earliest of which had used vibrating tools at the company since 1989, had developed and were subsequently diagnosed with HAVS in 2016. Despite the diagnosis, one of the workers continued working with vibrating tools, without effective measures in place to control the risk. The employees used tools such as hand grinders, air chisels, spindle grinders, and earlier on in their employment, jackhammers to finish cast iron drainage products.

A HSE investigation found that until 19 December 2017, the vibration risk assessment did not identify each employee's daily exposure to vibration and did not measure cumulative exposures of using different vibrating tools throughout a shift. The HSE also found there was inadequate health surveillance in place and employees were not made aware of HAVS and its symptoms. Despite health surveillance notifying the company of a HAVS diagnosis, the company had failed to take effective action to adjust the affected worker's job, meaning staff continued to be exposed to excessive vibration.

Saint-Gobain Construction Products UK Limited of Saint-Gobain House, East Leake, Loughborough, Leicestershire pleaded guilty to failing to discharge the duty imposed upon it by Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at work etc Act 1974. They were fined £500,000 and ordered to pay costs of £9,453.

HSE inspector Andrew Johnson said: "This was an established multinational company that had the resources to protect its workers from the effects of excessive vibration but failed to do so over a long period of time. All employers have a duty to provide effective measures to ensure the health of their staff is not seriously or permanently harmed by the work they are asked to do."

Life-changing injuries for employee of construction firm



A construction company has been sentenced after a self-employed ground worker sustained life changing injuries in an incident involving a disc cutter.

On 1 June 2017, self-employed ground worker Morgan Prosser, contracted by MJL Contractors Limited, was working to complete ground works at a new building site near Bodmin, Cornwall. Mr Prosser was using a petrol disc cutter to cut reinforced concrete beams to size. Whilst he was doing this the saw 'kicked up' and caused a severe laceration to his arm. Mr Prosser underwent months of operations following the incident to try to save his arm. However, it had to be amputated in October 2017, which has had a significant impact on his ability to work and his personal life.

The HSE's investigation found that MJL Contractors Limited were responsible for the groundworks at the site, including providing and maintaining the disc cutter. Mr Prosser had not been sufficiently trained to use the petrol disc cutter and the system of work in use for cutting reinforced concrete beams had not been planned or assessed to ensure the risks were properly controlled.

MJL should have been aware that Mr Prosser had no previous experience of undertaking such a task, says the HSE, and this should have been identified and addressed at his induction or at the time the work was allocated to him to complete.

MJL Contractors Limited of Hellys Court, Helston in Cornwall, were found guilty of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and fined £250,000 with costs of £100,000.

HSE inspector Georgina Symons said: "The contractor's injuries have been life changing. This serious incident could have easily been avoided if basic safeguards had been put in place."

Plant hire firm fined after employee suffers serious injuries



A plant hire company has been fined following an incident in which an employee was seriously injured when an excavator tracked backwards.

Trees were being cleared on part of a residential site in Mallow, Co. Cork on 20 July 2018, when the excavator on site hit the employee of Tom Lynes Plant Hire Ltd, who as a result, suffered a below knee amputation of his left leg.

The HSE investigation concluded that all appropriate safety measures were not in place at the time of the incident.

Tom Lynes Plant Hire Ltd pleaded guilty to S8(2)(a) contrary to S77(9) of the Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (regarding failing to manage and conduct work activities in a safe manner) and Regulation 25(1)(a) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (failing to ensure that persons, under your direct control, working on the construction site were in possession of a valid safety awareness registration card).

The company has been fined €80,000.

Mark Cullen, Chief Inspector with the HSE, said: "It is important that employers and employees engaged in work activities, where heavy machinery is involved, ensure that there are appropriate safe systems of work in place. Failure to do so, in this case, led to a serious incident and severe consequences for the injured employee."

Construction company fined after worker suffered multiple burns



Walden Builders Ltd has been sentenced after a worker was struck by a heated sheet of tin.

Leeds Magistrates' Court heard how on 18 September 2018, the company was demolishing an outbuilding in Littlethorpe, Ripon. During the demolition, the excavator being used struck a wall containing a 415v cable causing it to arc and ignite a fire. Efforts to put out the fire included holding a sheet of tin to shield the surroundings. The tin heated and dropped onto an operative who was working on the site causing burn injuries to the scalp, arm and hands.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had received a quote from Northern Power Grid for installation of new service termination equipment. The company failed to act on the quote and instruct the power company to terminate supply to the building.

Walden Builders Ltd of Green Croft, Pottery Lane, Littlethorpe, Ripon pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company has been fined £42,000 and ordered to pay £4,707 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Paul Thompson said: "The company should have ensured that there was no live power to the building prior to the start of demolition work. The company had failed to prepare a written plan for the demolition of the building or any site-specific risk assessments."

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