

Change to printing machine introduced risk from in-running nip



A plastics company in Suffolk failed to properly maintain a printing machine, which was involved in an incident in which a worker had his fingers crushed.

Robert Waters, 62, was cleaning the machine at Tenza Technologies Ltd's factory in Saxmundham, when the incident took place on 12 October 2011. The machine had been adjusted when two large rollers were installed, which had created a gap between them and the fixed moveable guards.

While he was cleaning the machine, his left hand became caught between the rollers and his ring finger was badly crushed. He was unable to return to work for 12 weeks owing to his injuries.

The HSE investigated the incident and found the machine was poorly maintained and had inadequate guarding. The company also failed to provide a suitable risk assessment, training, instruction, and supervision for workers using the machine.

On 4 November 2011, a Prohibition Notice was issued to the firm, which ordered the machine to be taken out of service until adequate guards were put in place. HSE inspector Ivan Brooke said: "The incident could have been prevented and a painful hand injury avoided, had Tenza Technologies had more robust systems in place to check the guarding was effective and properly maintained. It's essential that all control measures are routinely monitored and assessed to ensure they are fit for purpose. Otherwise, employee safety is compromised – as was the case here."

Tenza Technologies Ltd appeared at Lowestoft Magistrates' Court on 6 December and pleaded guilty to breaching s2(1) of the HSWA 1974. It was fined £4000 and ordered to pay £3613 in costs.

Source: SHP