

Worker Suffers Multiple Fractures at DS Smith Packaging

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An international supplier of paper and packaging has been fined after an employee suffered breaks to his arm and ribs in machinery at a Lincolnshire factory. The 27-year-old man, who does not wish to be named, was being trained to use a re-winder - a rotating spool that winds corrugated cardboard packaging into a roll - at DS Smith Packaging's plant at Windsor Road, Louth, when the incident happened on 9 June 2010.

A second member of staff was showing the employee how to attach the cardboard to the spool when his fingers became trapped. The second man, unaware of what had happened, then started the machine which threw the employee over the top.

He broke his right arm in several places and fractured his ribs. He was off work for a year and now has pins and plates in his arm. He has since returned to work for the company.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found there was no safe system of work in place and the incident could have been easily prevented.

DS Smith Packaging Ltd, of Lower Cookham Road, Maidenhead, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Today, Lincoln Crown Court fined the firm £50,000 and ordered it to pay costs of £8,244.

After the hearing HSE inspector Emma Madeley said:

"There was nothing to prevent the machine being started before people were clear of the danger zone. Having a second operator created a serious risk because the man operating the controls had no idea that his colleague was trapped. That working practice has now been changed. The company has also installed a guard so that the machine cannot begin rotating at speed if someone's hands are in the danger area. Unfortunately these measures have come too late for this employee who has been left with severe and permanent injuries."

Notes to editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to prevent death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training, new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. www.hse.gov.uk^[1]
2. Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 states: "It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees."