



Wilkins Safety Group

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Welcome to our latest Update E-Newsletter

As ever, please feel free to share this with friends and colleagues. You will also find PDF versions of all our other newsletters on our website: www.wilkinssafety.co.uk with lots more useful information and a wealth of leaflets covering Health and Safety topics.



This week we will give information on the legislation concerned with work equipment and machinery.

Every year, there are a number of accidents from using work equipment, including machinery. Many are serious and some are fatal.

This article gives simple, practical advice on what you can do to eliminate or reduce the risks from work equipment. It summarises the main requirements of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations.

We also have 2 recent HSE cases for you to look at both of which highlight PUWER:

- A man suffered severe lacerations to his arm, head and back. He required 44 stitches and 73 staples and needed a blood transfusion. He also suffered a fractured shoulder blade and damaged tendons in his right hand.
- A worker was using an angle grinder to cut a hole in one of the tanks, which had only recently been drained of fuel, when sparks ignited flammable vapours causing flames to erupt.

We have also added a film highlighting the dangers of texting whilst driving

If you, or somebody you know, are guilty of texting whilst driving watch this film. It is hard hitting but oh so true!

Work Equipment guidelines

Every year, there are a number of accidents from using work equipment, including machinery. Many are serious and some are fatal.

This leaflet explains what you, as an employer, may need to do to eliminate or reduce the risks from work equipment. It will also be useful to employees and their representatives.

It covers all workplaces and situations where the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 applies, including offshore installations. If you are an employer, a manager, a supervisor or hire out equipment for use in the workplace, this leaflet will help you understand what you can do to reduce the chances of an accident happening.

For some operations you will need more detailed information. If you wish to build, modify or add equipment (for example to a production line) you will probably need to seek advice from a competent engineer or equivalent person who is aware of the relevant European standards and requirements.

If you would like information on the law, or on other publications which give you more guidance on selection, protection measures and the safe use of particular types of machinery or other work equipment, see 'Further information'.

What is work equipment?

'Work equipment' is almost any equipment used by a worker while at work including:

- machines such as circular saws, drilling machines, photocopiers, mowing machines, tractors, dumper trucks and power presses;
- hand tools such as screwdrivers, knives, hand saws and meat cleavers;
- lifting equipment such as lift trucks, elevating work platforms, vehicle hoists,
- lifting slings and bath lifts;
- other equipment such as ladders and water pressure cleaners.



Who is responsible for work equipment

Employers and those who have control over work equipment (e.g. those hiring out work equipment) have responsibilities for equipment provided for use at work.

What do I need to do?

Look at all the equipment in use, decide what can cause risks, and how. Consider what can be done to prevent or reduce these risks by asking yourself:

- Do the current safeguards prevent injury?
- Is it practicable to fit further safeguarding measures if they do not?
- Is it practicable to modify or change the method of operation to make it safer?

The following information may help you decide what to do.

What risks are there from using work equipment?

Many things can cause a risk, for example:

- using the wrong equipment for the job, e.g. ladders instead of access towers for an extended job at high level;
- not fitting adequate guards on machines, leading to accidents caused by entanglement, shearing, crushing, trapping or cutting;
- not fitting adequate controls, or the wrong type of controls, so that equipment cannot be turned off quickly and safely, or starts accidentally;
- not properly maintaining guards, safety devices, controls etc. so that machines or equipment become unsafe;
- not providing the right information, instruction and training for those using the equipment;
- not fitting roll-over protective structures (ROPS) and using seat belts on mobile work equipment where there is a risk of roll over (**Note: this does not apply to quad bikes**);
- not maintaining work equipment or carrying out regular inspections and thorough examinations;
- not providing the personal protective equipment needed to use certain machines safely, e.g. chainsaws, angle grinders.

Identifying the risks

When identifying the risks, think about:

- all the work which has to be done with the equipment during normal use and also during setting-up, maintenance, repair, breakdowns and removal of blockages;
- who will use the equipment, including inexperienced workers, workers with language difficulties, new starters, people who have changed jobs within the company or those who may have particular difficulties, e.g. those with impaired mobility or poor readers;
- young people, who may be inexperienced and lack knowledge or awareness of existing or potential risks;
- workers who may act foolishly or carelessly or are likely to make mistakes;
- whether guards or safety devices are poorly designed and inconvenient to use or are easily defeated (this could encourage workers to risk injury);
- the type of power supply, eg electrical, hydraulic or pneumatic – each type has different risks and ways to control them.



What can I do to reduce the risks?

Use the right equipment for the job

Many accidents happen because people have not chosen the right equipment for the work to be done. Controlling the risk often means planning ahead and ensuring that suitable equipment or machinery is available.

Make sure machinery is safe

You should check the machinery is suitable for the work – think about how and where it will be used. All new machinery should be:

- safe, that means provided complete with all necessary guards and protective devices; CE marked (CE marking is not a guarantee that the machinery is safe, only the manufacturer's claim that the product meets all relevant supply Directive requirements);
- provided with an EC Declaration of Conformity (ask for a copy if you have not been given one);
- provided with instructions in English. These should state how to assemble, install, use, adjust and maintain the machinery, including dealing with blockages. The instructions should also give details on the protective measures to take, such as when personal protective equipment should be provided and used; warn of ways in which machinery must not be used; and of any remaining residual risks that need to be controlled by safe systems of work.

If you think that machinery you have bought is not safe **DO NOT USE IT**. Contact the manufacturer or supplier to discuss your concerns and if they are not helpful, contact HSE for advice.

Remember, it is your responsibility as an employer or a subcontractor to ensure you do not expose others to risk.

If you need further information please call us on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or send us an email at info@wilkinssafety.co.uk

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Now to the latest HSE cases:

Shropshire farmer in court after worker trapped in machinery

An Ellesmere arable farmer has received a conditional discharge after a worker suffered serious arm, head and back injuries while unblocking a grain drying machine.

The 27-year-old worker from Shropshire, who asked not to be named, was attempting to remove a blockage of wet grain inside the machine at GH and DP Jones' Red Hall Farm in Hordley on 17 September 2013.

Telford Magistrates' Court heard today (13 August) that the blockage was close to an auger screw, a large powered metal component used for distributing grain through the machine.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which brought the prosecution, said that the worker and his boss, farm owner George Jones, accessed the top of the grain dryer by ducking between the wooden bars of a second floor fence. Power to the auger screw was switched off and an unsuccessful attempt to unblock it using wooden poles was made.

Sometime later, the farm worker knelt down and started to unblock the machine using his hand. However, another employee turned the power to the auger screw back on and the worker was drawn into the machine. His arm was pulled under the auger screw and his torso and head were wedged between the screw and the trough it sits in.

Mr Jones shouted for the machine to be switched off, but the entanglement had caused the mechanism to fail and the auger screw stopped turning.

The court was told the worker was struggling to breathe as he was trapped underneath the auger until colleagues lifted it and cut the auger away with an angle grinder.

The man suffered severe lacerations to his arm, head and back. He required 44 stitches and 73 staples and needed a blood transfusion. He also suffered a fractured shoulder blade and damaged tendons in his right hand.

He was off work for more than six weeks but has since been able to return to work.

George Edward Jones, 66, of Hordley, Shropshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was sentenced to a two-year conditional discharge with £1,091 costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector David Kivlin said:

“This man is very lucky to be alive after suffering horrific injuries following an incident which was entirely preventable.

Farm managers and owners should ensure maintenance is planned properly and safe systems of work implemented.

Approximately 40% of fatal incidents involving agricultural machinery occur during unplanned maintenance activities. This could easily have been another with tragic consequences.”

For further guidance on the safe use of agricultural machinery, go to

http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/pdf/whss/agricultural_equipment.pdf

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Worker badly burned after firm ignores safety risks

A West Yorkshire company has been fined after a worker was severely burned in a flashover during hot-cutting work at the Fox’s Biscuits factory in Batley.

The 61-year-old Ossett man was one of a team working for steel fabricators Hartwell Manufacturing Ltd, which had been hired to remove three disused oil tanks at the Fox’s site in Wellington Street in February 2012.

The worker was using an angle grinder to cut a hole in one of the tanks, which had only recently been drained of fuel, when sparks ignited flammable vapours causing flames to erupt.

In a panic, the worker inserted a high pressure water lance into a pipe opening to try to put out the fire but instead caused a blow-back of flames to be ejected from the opening, engulfing his lower body in flames.

Huddersfield Magistrates heard (12 Aug) that another worker at the scene rushed to the injured man’s aid, putting out his burning clothes with a fire extinguisher. He suffered extensive burns and needed prolonged treatment and rehabilitation.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigated and prosecuted Hartwell Manufacturing Ltd for safety breaches

after discovering the firm had deviated from a safe system of work it had earlier agreed with Fox's Biscuits and their site managing firm. Instead of using cold-cutting equipment, the company had used a high-speed angle grinder, which produces heat and sparks.

HSE also found that the whole job of removing the huge tanks, in particular the means of access into the oil tanks and working in a confined space, had not been properly planned by Hartwells. In addition its emergency arrangements to evacuate any casualties on site were fundamentally flawed.

The court was told the company's managing director had failed to liaise with Fox's Biscuits when problems with access to the tanks emerged or when the company wanted to diverge from the agreed plan by using the hot-cutting, and thereby dangerous, angle grinder.

Hartwell Manufacturing Ltd, of Milner Way, Ossett, was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £7,885 in full costs after admitting breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector John Micklethwaite said:

"This worker suffered exceedingly painful burn injuries that could have been avoided if Hartwell Manufacturing had followed a safe system of work and not used the angle grinder. The company used a dangerous working practice on the site unbeknown to Fox's Biscuits.

"Work with flammable vapours must always be effectively controlled. If problems are encountered, you need to stop and reassess – not press on and use unsafe equipment which introduces an unacceptable risk of fire and explosion.

"The job should have been better planned and supervised. At several key points Hartwells failed to take the opportunity to stop the job, take stock and liaise with the occupier to ensure work could go ahead safely."

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And Finally for this week

Do you Text as you drive? Well watch this short film and think again!

This is a hard hitting 4 minute film that anyone who has been guilty of texting when driving, should watch!!

<http://youtu.be/pubTiDCEVZ8>





If you have any queries on any health and safety matter, please contact Jon Wilkins on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or by email on jon@wilkinssafety.co.uk



Your Business is
Safer in Our Hands