

£115,000 SAFETY VIOLATION

Packaging Company Fined £115,000 After Factory Mishap

Riftward Limited—trading as Playford Packaging—was fined after an employee was caught in the chain drive of a box-making machine while working at a factory in Wrexham. The company was fined **£115,000** and ordered to pay costs of **£5,5308**.

The incident took place at Riftward Packaging, Ash Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Wrexham. The employee's hand was severed after his sleeve became caught in the chain of a factory machine while attempting to make repairs. The hand was reattached during an 11-hour operation, but the injury will have lifelong effects.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the **company's risk assessment was not sufficient** and hadn't considered the hazards present during the machine's use, including those related to maintenance activities. Additionally, it was common practice for workers to bypass a gate that separated them from the machine. As such, employees hadn't received instructions for the safe isolation of the machine. On 14th September 2022, Riftward Packaging pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

What Could Have Been Done?

Riftward Limited's failure to keep its employees safe while repairing machinery demonstrates what can go wrong should employers not abide by HSE regulations. In contrast, employers can fulfil their legal obligations by ensuring that work with machinery is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people. Further, it's critical for employers to conduct thorough risk assessments and employee training to help prevent worker injuries and ensure adequate insurance cover.

For additional workplace safety and risk management guidance, **contact us today**.

