



## FIRM FINED FOR FAILING TO CONTROL

### WOOD DUST RISK

Volume 3 Issue 5

Newsletter Date: May 2011

ABC Health and Safety Ltd are now Registered to run the following courses. Spaces are limited so please contact us as soon as possible:

- **IOSH Managing Safely**

Next course:

TBA

- **IOSH Working Safely**

Next course

TBA

- **IOSH Managing Environmental Responsibilities**

Next course

TBA

- **NVQ Level 3 and 4 in Occupational Health and Safety**

If you would like any more information about any of the above courses please contact us:

[info@abchsltd.co.uk](mailto:info@abchsltd.co.uk)

Date: 26th May 2011

A Southampton-based decking company has been sentenced after failure to control the risks of exposure to wood dust and adhesives at its Totton plant. Millbrook Furnishing Industries Limited was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for failing to control or assess the substances which are known to cause ill health and severe allergic reactions between August 2006 and April 2008.

The firm build hot tub deckings at its Calmore Industrial Estate site using Western Red Cedar wood, bonded with isocyanate-based glue.

Southampton Crown Court heard HSE investigated after a Millbrook employee suffered anaphylactic shock in February 2007 and reported the incident to the safety watchdog months later.

The 45-year-old worker was taken to hospital with severe breathing difficulties after using an adhesive and being exposed to wood dust while sanding frames at the site but Millbrook Industries failed to carry out its own investigation into the cause of the employee's ill-health.

The firm continued to use the same materials despite not assessing the risk of using isocyanate glues and Western Red Cedar wood, or taking the necessary preventative measures.

It failed to identify materials likely to cause allergic reactions and provided no health surveillance for employees building the hot tub decking. HSE Inspectors also found that local exhaust ventilation was inadequate to control exposure to the harmful wood dust and glue vapours. Protective face masks were provided on the site, however these were not always worn.

For months the company continued to place employees at risk until HSE was approached in October 2007 by the employee who had taken ill. Enforcement notices were then served.

HSE Inspector Dennis MacWilliam said: "In this case, a lack of understanding regarding the hazards associated with adhesives and wood dust, plus a clear failure to control exposure meant Millbrook Industries failed in its duty to its employees. "Not conducting a risk assessment meant the firm did not identify which employees were exposed to these substances and in turn employees were not told about the risks of working with such substances.

"Staff had access to overalls, gloves and masks on site, but unbelievably there was no training, guidance or rules provided regarding their use.

"Work of this nature must be properly planned and an effective and safe system needs to be in place to protect workers when exposing them to isocyanates and wood dust. Had this been done then employees' health would not have been put at risk."

Millbrook Furnishing Industries Limited of Nutsey Lane, Calmore Industrial Estate, Totton, Southampton, pleaded guilty to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. It was fined a total of £27,000 and ordered to pay costs of £25,000

**For other course dates for the rest of the year, please contact ABC on 01304 206228 or email on [info@abchsltd.co.uk](mailto:info@abchsltd.co.uk)**

