Plant Nursery Worker Safety Fatality File



Nursery fined $52,500 after worker entangled in machine

Arborline Pty Ltd pleaded guilty in the Hamilton Magistrates' Court on Friday to one charge of failing to provide or maintain plant that was safe and without risks to health.

The company was fined $52,500 without conviction and ordered to pay costs of $3,716.

The court heard that in October 2020, the injured worker was tasked with putting seed trays through a seeding line machine, which places seed in the tray cells as they move along a conveyor belt.

The worker reached into the machine, which she believed was turned off, to clear the spilled seeds and her arm became entangled between a moving feeder bar and an axle, causing serious injury to her hand and wrist.

The court heard that the company had failed to install required guarding around the exit of the machine and that it had been reasonably practicable to do so to reduce or eliminate the risk of injury.

WorkSafe Executive Director of Health and Safety Narelle Beer stressed the importance of guarding when it came to protecting workers from the well-known risks associated with moving machinery.

"It's absolutely essential that duty holders are doing everything they can to protect workers from the risk of machine entanglement," Dr Beer said.

"It's not enough to simply tell workers to be cautious. There needs to be proper guarding around danger areas of a machine to prevent gruesome injuries like this."

To manage risks when working with machinery employers should:

- Identify hazards, assess the risks associated with them and eliminate or

control those risks by isolating them or using an alternative.

- Train staff in the safe operation of machines and equipment and provide written procedures in the worker’s first language.
- Develop and implement safe operating procedures in consultation with employees and health and safety representatives.
- Ensure safety guards and gates are compliant and always fixed to machines.
- Regularly service and inspect machines and equipment.
- Place signs on or near a machine to alert employees of the dangers of operating it.