



**SUBJECT:** **Guarding – the last line of defence**

**RECIPIENTS:** All Services – Including Schools

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## How many fingers can you see

A major Steel giant has been fined nearly £2m after separate incidents at one of its plants saw two workers' fingers severed by machinery that did not have suitable guarding.

The Crown Court heard that an employee lost two thirds of his left hand and his middle and ring fingers as he attempted to clear a blockage on a steel tube manufacturing line.

Five months later, another employee was receiving refresher training when his left hand became caught in an inadequately guarded machine, severing his little finger.

The HSE investigation found that the firm failed to appropriately manage the risks and apply suitable guarding for dangerous parts of machinery.

The company pleaded guilty to two breaches of **Section 2(1)** of the Health and Safety at Work Act. It was fined a total of £1.98m, £185,000 for the first offence and £1.8m for the second. It was ordered to pay costs of £22,500.

HSE inspector Mark Austin said: "Guarding of dangerous parts of machinery is a fundamental [element] of ensuring workers' safety. The HSE will not hesitate to hold those accountable who do not fulfil their legal obligations, especially if that results in someone receiving life changing injuries."

It is the fourth time this company has been convicted for safety failings in the past three years. Most recently, the firm was fined £180,000 after an employee was showered in molten metal as he hosed water onto 25 tonnes of spilled metal.

**If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:**

**Your Mouchel Health & Safety Adviser (see George section: Corporate > Information for Working > Risk Management > H&S Advisers)**