

# WORKSAFE

Mahi Haumaru Aotearoa

## Notifications during COVID-19 restrictions

We are operating at reduced capacity due to COVID-19 Alert Level Two restrictions. Please only call our 0800 number if someone is at serious risk of harm or has been seriously injured, become seriously ill, or died as a result of work.

For other notifications please complete our online forms at [Notify WorkSafe](#).

News and media

## Don't let your standards for operating machinery slip

16 September 2020

Meat manufacturer Hellers Limited has been sentenced for health and safety failures at the Christchurch District Court this week after a worker lost four fingers in a machine used to process meat.

During the March 2019 incident while cleaning the machine a worker reached in to clear meat from between a rotating paddle and the inside wall of the machine, when his fingers became caught.

The machine hadn't been stopped correctly and it restarted as part of its cycle. Four fingers on the worker's hand were immediately amputated. The worker's fingers were unable to be reattached. The machine has since been removed from production.

WorkSafe's Chief Inspector Steve Kelly said a WorkSafe investigation found the method of operating the machine had been unsafely adapted.

"Instead of accessing the machine via its raised platform and from behind an interlocked guard, a step ladder was used to gain access to an unguarded area of the machinery, against best practice and the direction of the manufacturers operating manual.

"The company's standard operating procedure and risk assessment for the machine were neither monitored or reviewed allowing this adapted method of cleaning the machine to go unchallenged and uncontrolled.

"Hellers' failures to ensure employees were carrying out work safely put workers at very serious risk, and in this instance, led to a worker suffering from life changing injuries."

The company was ordered to pay a fine of \$193,500 as well as \$60,000 in reparation to the victim.

### Notes:

- A fine of \$193,500 was imposed.
- Reparation of \$60,000 was ordered.
- Hellers Limited was sentenced under sections 36(1)(a), 48(1) and (2)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

- Being a PCBU having a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers who work for the PCBU, while the workers are at work in the business or undertaking, namely while operating the Laska Mixer Grinder Machine, did fail to comply with that duty and that failure exposed the workers to a risk of serious injury.
- S 48 (2)(c) carries a maximum penalty of \$1,500,000.

## Media contact details

For more information you can contact our Media Team [using our media request form](#). Alternatively, you can:

**Phone:** 021 823 007 or

**Email:** [media@worksafe.govt.nz](mailto:media@worksafe.govt.nz)

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