



News Release - SafeWork SA

20 April 2007

\$45k FINE FOR CHEMICAL BURNS

A lack of attention to chemical safety has resulted in a major company being fined \$45,000 over injuries suffered by a worker in December 2005.

Today in the SA Industrial Relations Court, **George Weston Foods Ltd** received its penalty after pleading guilty to a safety breach that occurred at its **Jasol Australia** chemical business at Regency Park.

The court heard how a 60 year old casual storeman suffered burns to his feet, body and eyes when highly corrosive sodium hypochlorite spilled on him during a decanting operation.

The man has since made a full recovery and is back at work with the company.

Today Industrial Magistrate Richard Hardy said there was a failure to carry out the appropriate hazard identification and risk assessment procedure with regards to the decanting, and also a failure to develop and maintain a safe system for the operation.

This is the fourth breach of workplace safety laws by the company, and despite the previous incidents occurring at other premises under its management, Magistrate Hardy said that was no excuse.

"It is my view that as a corporation with several constituent businesses, the defendant ought to have learned its lesson and applied it throughout its corporate structure."

He did note the company's early guilty plea, contrition and cooperation in rectifying its shortcomings. Magistrate Hardy reduced the penalty by 25 per cent from \$60,000 to \$45,000.

"This ruling shows that different businesses can't have different safety standards under the one owner," says SafeWork SA Acting Executive Director, Peter Hampton.

"Large employers with diversified interests need to pay closer attention to safety to ensure that all employees and clients enjoy the same protection from harm, no matter what activity they're engaged in."

For answers and advice on workplace health and safety and the relevant laws, SafeWork SA operates a telephone Help Centre on 1 300 365 255 or 8303 0400. To report serious accidents or incidents, in the workplace call 1 800 777 209