



Media Release - SafeWork SA

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UNSAFE WORK SYSTEM RESULTS IN INJURY AND FINE

An Adelaide car component maker has been fined over unsafe work systems that resulted in an experienced employee suffering a permanent hand injury.

Nylex Industrial Products Pty. Ltd. trading as **Exacto Plastics** had already pleaded guilty in the SA Industrial Relations Court to breaching section 19 of the *Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986*.

Yesterday, Industrial Magistrate Stephen Lieschke imposed a conviction and fine of \$18,975 reduced from \$23,000 due to the defendant's guilty plea and its cooperation with SafeWork SA.

The incident happened in November 2004 at the company's Exacto Plastics factory at suburban Beverley.

The man, who worked as die-setter, had tried to change the die of an injection moulding machine by himself, in what is normally a two person operation.

In doing so, his finger slipped from a button, which had to be held down in order to open the machine. His right hand was caught and crushed in the open trap point and resulted in permanent loss of function of his right thumb.

In its prosecution case, SafeWork SA argued that the company:

- failed to provide safe plant
- failed to provide a safe system of work.

Magistrate Lieschke said the company had failed to take all reasonably practicable steps to minimise the potential risks.

It was found that engineering solutions to the hazard could have been implemented but were not considered because the risk of injury was thought to be minor. Nor was there an adequate safe operating procedure for the particular task involved.

"A thorough and competent hazard identification and risk analysis could have prevented this injury," says Michele Patterson, the Executive Director of SafeWork SA.

"It is a pity that only after this event, did the company alter the machine involved to eliminate the need for someone to put their hand into it at all.

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.