



Allweld Mobile Sandblasting Ltd.

Vancouver, British Columbia Canada

(604) 299-0932 or 1-(888) 599-0932

www.AllweldSandblasting.com

Since 1984

Sandblasting company fined £26,000 = 40,333.8 US\$ for using banned substance

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HSE/PROSECUTIONS/NW/017/08

The Health and Safety Executive has issued a reminder that the use of sand containing silica for dry sand blasting of vehicles is prohibited and of the need to have properly maintained protective respiratory equipment to prevent exposure to silicosis.

Sand blasting involves launching an abrasive material at high speed to clean and smooth a surface.

The warning follows the prosecution of Andrew Thomson, trading as Thomson Sandblast, of Alan Ramsbottom Way, Great Harwood, under health and safety legislation. Andrew Thomson pleaded guilty at Hyndburn Magistrates Court to six charges and was fined a total of £26,000 and ordered to pay £24,000 costs.

The Health and Safety Executive investigated the company after receiving a complaint that sand containing free silica was being used for the dry sand blasting of vehicles.

Blasting of articles using sand containing free silica has been banned since 1950 and can lead to silicosis, which is progressive, irreversible and can continue to develop after exposure ceases.

Health and Safety Executive Principal Inspector Dorothy Shaw said:

"When the premises were visited the general conditions were found to be poor. Vehicles were being dry blasted using what was suspected to be sand in a building that was not fully enclosed or had a filtered extraction unit. The respiratory protection equipment being used was in poor condition putting employees at risk from silicosis, which is a chronic obstructive, pulmonary disease characterized by breathlessness and a chronic cough.

"The HSE sets limits for exposure to workplace hazardous substances and employers have a primary duty to prevent exposure, in this case, by substituting the sand for a safer alternative which does not contain free silica. Where prevention is not reasonably practical employers have a secondary duty to control exposure by using appropriate work processes, systems and controls and the use of suitable work equipment and materials.

"The dry blasting of vehicles with sand containing silica and the non compliance of enforcement notices are regarded as very serious matters by the HSE. When passing sentence on Mr Thomson, the Magistrates commented that there had been a complete disregard for Health and Safety and that they had considered a custodial sentence."



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Health and Safety Inspectors visited the premises on 29 June 2006 and the complaint was found to be justified. A Prohibition Notice was served prohibiting sand blasting without adequate respiratory protection equipment and Improvement Notices served for failing to maintain respiratory protection equipment, failing to provide suitable facilities for eating and drinking and for failing to provide engineering control measures.

The premises were revisited on 6 February 2007 and it was found that conditions had not changed and the enforcement notices had not been complied with. A further Prohibition Notice was served prohibiting sand blasting without adequate respiratory equipment,