

## Furnace re-liner ignored vibration and silicosis risks

**A manufacturer of monolithic refractory products that put workers at risk of developing Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) and silicosis has been fined.**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) launched an investigation after Calderys UK reported in early 2017 that two employees had contracted HAVS at its Leeds production plant.

It found that since 2006 there had been no control measures in place to reduce workers' exposure to vibration when using pneumatic tools. In addition, a health surveillance programme was not in place to help them identify the first symptoms of HAVS.

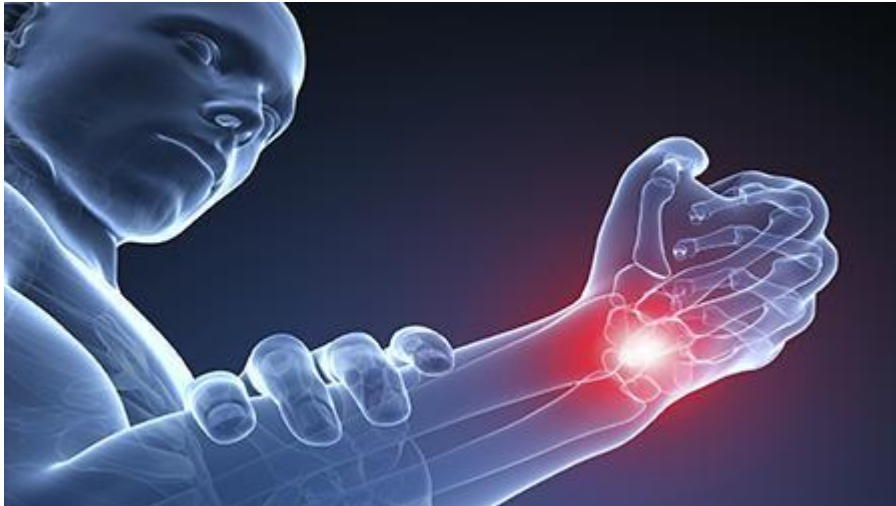
The investigation also revealed that, between April 2004 and December 2017, Calderys had failed to limit respirable crystalline silica (RCS) exposure for employees tasked with stripping and replacing furnace linings.

Calderys pleaded guilty to breaching regs 6(1) and 7(1) of the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations, and regs 7(1) and 11(1) of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulation. It was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay £4,864 at Leeds Magistrates Court.

Calderys *"has a strong commitment to workplace health because our employees are potentially exposed to mineral dust, noise and vibrations"*, according to its website. *"We have implemented a number of health programs, both on production sites and offices, aiming to improve the overall wellness of our employees and their families."*

The company closed its factory in Leeds in October 2015. In 2016 it reported turnover of £6.4m, down from £10m the previous year.

HSE inspector Julian Franklin said: *"Exposure to silica can cause silicosis, leading to impaired lung function, lung cancer and death. It can also lead to chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD)."*



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