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For Immediate Release
July 20, 2015

Sof Surfaces Inc. Fined \$70,000 After Worker Loses Foot

SARNIA, ON – Sof Surfaces Inc., a company that manufactures rubberized safety tiles for use in children’s playgrounds, has pleaded guilty and has been fined \$70,000 after a worker lost a foot to moving machinery.

On October 9, 2013, workers at the company’s facility at 4393 Discovery Line in Petrolia were cleaning the lids on a large carousel machine used to make rubberized tile. Rubber, additives and binders are put into this machine, which rotates through several production stages to make a rubberized tile. Excess material builds up inside the lids of the various cells of the carousel and is cleaned out using hand-held tools.

One worker was cleaning the lids along with a production supervisor and another worker; each worked at their own cell on the carousel. When cleaning was complete, the carousel would be rotated and another cell would be in place for cleaning, with the rotation process continuing until all the lids and cells were cleaned.

The carousel was in a fenced-off area. In order to access the carousel for cleaning, the two workers were situated inside the fenced-off area, with rotation and control of the carousel conducted by the supervisor. Before rotating the carousel, the supervisor would call out “Clear,” and the two workers would back up (while still remaining inside the fenced area) and respond “Clear,” and the supervisor would then rotate the carousel.

The equipment and presses were not blocked, de-energized or locked out during the cleaning process. Furthermore, safety devices such as interlock switches on the gates and light curtains were bypassed to allow the carousel to move while workers were inside the fenced area.

On that morning, the supervisor set the carousel in motion. When rotated, a plate on each cell is lowered. A plate came down on one worker’s foot while the worker was still inside the fenced area. The worker sustained a crushing injury and the foot was surgically amputated as a result of the incident.

The injured worker was a temporary employee placed at Sof Surfaces by an employment agency.

Section 75 of Ontario Regulation 851 – the Industrial Establishments Regulation – prescribes that “a part of a machine, transmission machinery, device or thing shall be cleaned, oiled, adjusted, repaired or have maintenance work performed on it only when: (a) motion that may endanger a worker has stopped; and (b) any part that has been stopped and that may subsequently move and endanger a worker has been blocked to prevent its movement.”

Sof Surfaces Inc. pleaded guilty to failing as an employer to ensure the proper measures and procedures were carried out and was fined \$70,000 by Justice of the Peace Anna Hampson in Sarnia court on July 20, 2015.

In addition to the fine, the court imposed a 25-per-cent victim fine surcharge as required by the Provincial Offences Act. The surcharge is credited to a special provincial government fund to assist victims of crime.

For further information:

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Court Information at a Glance

Location:	Provincial Offences Court/Ontario Court of Justice 150 North Christina Street Courtroom 1 Sarnia, Ontario
Judge:	Justice of the Peace Anna Hampson
Date of Sentencing:	July 20, 2015
Defendant:	Sof Surfaces Inc. 4393 Discovery Line Petrolia, Ontario
Matter:	Occupational health and safety
Conviction:	Occupational Health and Safety Act Section 25(1)(c) Ontario Regulation 851 (Industrial Establishments Regulation) Section 75
Crown Counsel:	Jai Dhar



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