

CASE STUDY: COMPANY GUILTY OF CORPORATE MANSLAUGHTER



The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has secured another successful conviction under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007, following the prosecution of a Runcorn-based kayak manufacturer, after the death of a worker who was trapped in an industrial oven.

On 23 December 2010, a 54-year-old team leader at the Pyranha Mouldings factory in Runcorn, Cheshire, had gone inside an industrial oven to scrape up dripped plastic.

Subsequently, another worker, turned the oven on, without realising the team leader was inside. As it was switched on, the doors automatically shut and locked, leaving him trapped inside the oven with no means of escape or raising the alarm.

It was only after smoke began pouring out of the oven that the team leader was discovered. The evidence indicated that he had tried to escape from the oven using a crowbar but suffered severe burns and died from shock. An escape hatch has been fitted to oven since the accident.

Pyranha Mouldings was successfully prosecuted by the CPS under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.

The Technical Director of the company, who had designed the oven, was also found guilty of offences under the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974. Two other directors were cleared of health and safety offences in other court proceedings.

At the time of writing the company is due to be sentenced.