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# Major Pizza Maker Fined Â£800,000 After Two Workers Caught in Machinery

## Description

### Serious Incidents Lead to Major Penalty for Stateside Foods Limited

One of the nation's leading producers of supermarket pizzas, Stateside Foods Limited, has been fined Â£800,000 after two employees suffered severe injuries at its Bolton factory. The company, responsible for millions of pizzas supplied to major UK supermarkets, faced this hefty penalty due to accidents occurring in 2020 at its Westhoughton site.

### The Incidents and Their Impact

The first incident took place on January 8, 2020. An employee was working at the Lancaster Way factory when his arm was caught in an inadequately guarded conveyor belt. The injury was severe, necessitating the removal of muscle and a skin graft. This worker has not been able to return to work since the incident and has been diagnosed with hypersensitivity in the affected arm.

Just nine months later, on October 14, 2020, another serious accident occurred. Andrew Holloway, a father of two, was working a night shift when he was alerted to a problem on the production line. Investigating the issue, his right hand was drawn between a roller and a conveyor belt. The result was catastrophic; part of his middle finger was severed. Despite emergency surgery, doctors could not save the top section of his finger, though they managed to salvage his ring finger by inserting a wire.

Holloway described the harrowing experience: "My right hand was drawn into the roller on the machine, and when I pulled my hand out, my fingers were hanging off. The pain was unbearable, worse than anything I had ever experienced. After the first operation, the surgeon informed me that he couldn't save my middle finger and had to remove part of it."

His recovery has been slow and painful. Holloway needed a second operation due to improper healing, which further impacted his ability to perform everyday tasks and enjoy his favorite hobbies, such as art. He shared, "I was unable to care for my three-year-old son after the accident. Even simple tasks like dressing myself became impossible. My fingers are stiff and sensitive, making winter particularly excruciating."

### Legal Proceedings and Investigation Findings

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) conducted a thorough investigation into these incidents. They discovered that Stateside Foods Limited had failed to properly guard their machinery. Additionally, the company did not conduct adequate checks to ensure that safety measures were functional and allowed the disabling of these guarding systems, giving employees access to dangerous parts of the

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machinery.

At Bolton Crown Court, Stateside Foods Limited admitted to breaching Section 2 (1) and 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act. Consequently, the court imposed an £800,000 fine and ordered the company to pay £5,340 in costs on March 15, 2024.

## Reflections and Industry Implications

Leanne Ratcliffe, an HSE inspector, emphasized the gravity of the injuries and the broader implications for industry practices. “This is one of the country’s major food companies. The injuries sustained by these workers have been truly life-changing. This case sends a strong message to the industry about the importance of understanding the risks associated with bypassing safety measures. Companies must reevaluate their guarding arrangements and procedures to eliminate access to dangerous parts of machinery. We will always take action when companies fall short of their duties to protect their staff.”

HSE enforcement lawyers Sam Crockett and Kate Harney, supported by senior paralegal officer Stephen Parkinson, presented the case against Stateside Foods Limited. Their successful prosecution highlights the serious consequences of neglecting workplace safety and underscores the HSE’s commitment to enforcing compliance with health and safety regulations.

In conclusion, the hefty fine and public scrutiny faced by Stateside Foods Limited serve as a stark reminder to all companies about the critical importance of safeguarding their employees. The tragedies experienced by the injured workers underscore the human cost of inadequate safety measures, reinforcing the need for vigilant adherence to safety protocols in all industrial operations.

### CATEGORY

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13. Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
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18. Machine Guarding
  19. Safety Regulations
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