

Amey Rail Limited fined £533,000 following electrical shock injury to worker

April 6, 2023



Amey Rail Limited (ARL) has been fined £533,000 after pleading guilty to an offence under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, which followed an investigation and prosecution by industry regulator the Office of Rail and Road (ORR).

The incident involving Mr. Allister Hunt, a self-employed senior linesman for Amey, happened on 25 December 2019 as he carried out remedial 'snagging' works to overhead lines 2.5 miles outside Paddington Station, near Kensal Green, London.

The on-site team were unaware that they were working outside the electrical isolation and as a consequence Mr. Hunt touched the contact wire, live at 25,000 volts, which resulted in electric-shock injuries. Mr. Hunt suffered 55% burns, which have required skin grafts, while his eyesight and hearing were also both affected.

ORR found that:

- ARL had no effective and adequate system in place to ensure that the process of planning the works was carried out in a way that ensured the health and safety of those working on electrical lines
- ARL did not have effective systems in place to supervise the safe conduct of the works
- ARL failed to ensure that Test Before Touch was properly and adequately carried out

Ian Prosser, Chief Inspector of Railways, said: “Mr Hunt suffered terrible, life-changing injuries, and could have died because of Amey Rail Limited’s inadequate measures.

“We welcome this judgement and we hope it sends a clear message to anyone responsible for work on the railway about the need to safeguard those working on it.”

An Amey spokesperson said: “We can confirm at a hearing at Westminster Magistrates Court on Tuesday 28th March 2023, Amey Rail Ltd (ARL), pleaded guilty to a breach of Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. This related to an incident that occurred in December 2019 at a track location close to Kensal Green.

“We regret that this incident took place and resulted in injuries to one of our sub-contractors. The health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, subcontractors and the public is our top priority. We are committed to safe working practices at all times and we have reviewed and strengthened our operating procedures following this incident.

“The Court acknowledged the steps the business had taken to prevent a recurrence and the high level of cooperation with the ORR investigation. It was recognised the company has a good health and safety record, there were health and safety procedures in place at the time of the incident but these had not been adequately followed on this occasion.”

Photo credit: ORR