

06-29

For Immediate Release  
March 2, 2006

## **COLUMBIA FOREST PRODUCTS FINED \$80,000 FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY VIOLATION**

NORTH BAY, Ont. – Columbia Forest Products, a Portland, Oregon-based manufacturer of hardwood plywood and hardwood veneer, with a mill that produces hardwood plywood in Rutherglen, Ont., was fined \$80,000 on February 28, 2006 for a violation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act that resulted in serious finger injuries to an employee.

On July 31, 2003, a worker was placing strips of wood into a “splicer” (a machine that cut, pressed and glued together wood strips to create hardwood veneer) when the worker’s hand was drawn into the machine by the wood. The worker’s fingertips came in contact with a “pinch point” (a point where the machine’s blade came in contact with the wood it was splicing). The worker suffered crushing injuries to the fingers and amputation of the tip of a middle finger. The incident occurred at the company’s mill on Highway 17 East in Rutherglen, a town located about 35 kilometres (22 miles) east of North Bay.

A Ministry of Labour investigation found there was a plexiglass guard in place to prevent a worker’s hand from coming in contact with the pinch point, but the guard had become warped in several places due to heat generated by the machine. As a result, there were gaps along the guard.

Columbia Forest Products pleaded guilty, as an employer, to failing to ensure an in-running nip hazard, or any part of the splicer machine that could endanger a worker’s safety, was equipped with, and guarded by, a guard or other device that would prevent access to the machine’s pinch point, as required by Section 25 of the Regulations for Industrial Establishments. This was contrary to Section 25(1)(c) of the act.

The fine was imposed by Justice of the Peace Gilles Lecouteur of the Ontario Court of Justice in North Bay. In addition, 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.

Contacts:  
Belinda Sutton  
Ministry of Labour  
416-326-7405

Joe Ferraro  
Crown Counsel  
Legal Services Branch  
Ministry of Labour  
416-326-7975

Court Information at a Glance

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Location:</b>    | Ontario Court of Justice<br>360 Plouffe Street, Courtroom 301<br>North Bay, Ontario |
| <b>Judge:</b>       | Justice of the Peace Gilles Lecouteur   |
| <b>Date / Time:</b> | February 28, 2006, 9:30 a.m.  |
| <b>Defendant:</b>   | Columbia Forest Products  |
| <b>Matter:</b>      | Occupational Health & Safety  |

*Disponible en français*

[www.labour.gov.on.ca](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca)