

Energy generator Drax pleads not guilty in health and safety wood dust case

Energy giant Drax Power has pleaded not guilty to allegations that wood dust from its biomass pellets posed a risk to employees' health.

In September 2021, Sky News revealed the energy producer was facing criminal prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for two alleged offences.

Appearing via video link at Leeds Crown Court, Dominic Kay QC, representing Drax Power Ltd, today pleaded not guilty to both charges.

Drax is accused of exposing employees to wood dust at its Selby plant – where it burns woody biomass to generate electricity – thereby risking their “health, safety and welfare at work”.

It is also charged with failing to make a suitable risk assessment before allowing employees to work with potentially “hazardous substances” at the biomass power station, which is the largest of its kind in the UK.

The case was initially heard at Leeds Magistrates' Court before being transferred to the crown court.

The trial was today scheduled for June 2023.

Watch the Daily Climate Show at 6.30pm Monday to Friday on Sky News, the Sky News website and app, on YouTube and Twitter.

The show investigates how global warming is changing our landscape and highlights solutions to the crisis.