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Taylor woman gets \$1.6M in settlement over slicer incident

BY PETER CAMERON, STAFF WRITER / PUBLISHED: JANUARY 24, 2017

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A Taylor woman who lost much of the use of her hand in a nasty accident involving a meat slicer received a \$1.6 million settlement Friday.

After a four-day trial, a jury in Northampton County decided two companies must pay the plaintiff Tanya M. Fuller and her husband Gary Fuller \$1,627,318.91, their Kingston-based attorney David Selingo said.

The defendants are Reliant Easton Holdings, which owns the Easton Health & Rehabilitation Center, a nursing home, and Healthcare Services Group.

When she was injured in Easton on July 24, 2013, Tanya Fuller was an employee of Northeast Commercial Sharpening Service, which provides knife sharpening services to various institutions and restaurants. As part of her job, she drove to the Easton Health & Rehabilitation Center to pick up an automatic meat slicer for sharpening.

While loading the disassembled slicer into her van, the blade fell on Tanya Fuller, lacerating her right forearm and severing nine tendons, an artery and two nerves.

Tanya Fuller testified that she came to the aid of employee of the Greg Piorier, an employee of the Healthcare Services Group, a contractor for the Easton Health & Rehabilitation Center, when he requested help loading the device.

Piorier said he was interacting with her pit bull in the front seat of the van and that Tanya Fuller was loading the slicer alone when the accident occurred.

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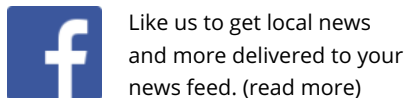



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Both sides agreed the blade guard was not in place on the slicer, Selingo said. The plaintiff accused Piorier of not alerting Tanya Fuller to this fact.

After an initial surgery and physical therapy, she did not regain sensation in her dominant right hand. About seven months later, Randall Culp, M.D., of the Philadelphia Hand Center, performed a second surgery, and Tanya Fuller regained some feeling, but developed an "extremely dangerous" bone infection, Selingo said.

Fearing a spreading of the infection, the surgeon amputated her right index finger. To help her regain some use of her hand, Culp then fused her thumb at a 45 degree angle, allowing her to use her remaining fingers like a grasping claw. She underwent five total hand surgeries.

The initial award of \$1.85 million was reduced by 13 percent to compensate for Tanya Fuller's own contributory negligence, Selingo said.

Northampton County Judge Michael Koury Jr. presided over the trial.

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