

COURT ■ £18,500 fine after window accident

Customer cut in glass 'explosion'

By STAFF REPORTER

A Norwich firm was yesterday fined more than £18,000 after a customer walked through a plate glass window, suffering serious cuts.

Dr Phillip Kirby went to Lookers Toyota in Mile Cross Lane on January 30 to buy a car.

But as he left, he put his right hand out to push open what he thought was the glass door and it "exploded" cutting his left knee, right buttock and causing serious injuries to his right hand and thumb.

The company deeply regretted the accident and had put safety film on all the glass in its showrooms, which was not up to standard, Norwich magistrates heard.

Sally Baits, prosecuting for Norwich City Council, told magistrates that the glass in the wall was "wholly inadequate" being six millimetres thick where it should have been 10 millimetres thick.

The glass wall was not made from safety material, and

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Sally Baits, prosecuting for Norwich City Council

sales literature usually stuck on the glass had been removed for cleaning purposes, the court heard.

"Dr Kirby put his right hand out to push what he thought was an entrance door and went right through it. The glass exploded on to the forecourt and showroom and shards of glass were still left in the frame," Miss Baits said.

Dr Kirby had to have plastic surgery on his hand after severing a nerve, artery and tendon and would suffer sensory loss for the rest of his life, the court heard.

Following the accident the glass wall was replaced by 6.4

millimetre laminated glass.

Lookers admitted exposing non-employees to risk under the terms of the Health and Safety Act and was fined £15,000 by magistrates.

The company was fined another £3500 after admitting a further charge of exposing its staff to risk.

It was also ordered to pay £1351 costs but no compensation order was made because Dr Kirby has already started civil proceedings against the company.

John Bucklow, defending, said the glass wall Dr Kirby walked through normally had sales literature on it.