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Coatbridge Woman Awarded Damages After Faulty LG Phone Sparks House Fire

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A woman from Coatbridge has won a legal claim against a mobile phone manufacturer after a faulty device caused a fire that damaged her home and left her with lasting health effects. The court awarded nearly £150,000 in damages, most of which will go to insurers who covered the cost of repairs.

The incident took place in the early hours of 31 October 2018, when Denise Parks and her husband Robert were asleep in their home on Forge Drive, Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire. At around 3am, a fire broke out in their living room. Investigations found that an LG mobile phone, which had been provided to Mrs Parks by her employer, North Lanarkshire Council, was the source of the blaze. The device was destroyed in the fire, with minor damage also caused to another phone and a computer.

Mrs Parks was treated for smoke inhalation and experienced a worsening of her existing anxiety and panic attack issues. She was unable to work from 2 November 2018 until 7 February 2019 as a result of the incident.

She brought a case against LG Electronics UK Ltd at the personal injury court at Edinburgh Sheriff Court, claiming damages for the harm caused. The company contested the claim, but Sheriff Robert Fife ruled in her favour after finding, on the balance of probabilities, that the LG device was defective and had ignited while in normal use.

In his judgment, Sheriff Fife concluded that Mrs Parks had established both the liability of the manufacturer and the fact that she had suffered injury due to the fire. He stated that at the time the blaze started, the phone was connected to a suitable charger and was being used in a standard manner. He further noted that a properly functioning product would not have failed in such circumstances.

Sheriff Fife said: “The court was entitled to draw an inference that the LG was defective. The LG did not meet the standard of safety that persons generally are entitled to expect.”

Mrs Parks, a home support carer employed by the local authority, was awarded £149,496 in damages. Of this, over £140,000 will be paid to her insurers who covered the cost of the property damage, with the remainder going directly to her.

The ruling serves as a reminder of the importance of product safety and the legal responsibilities of manufacturers to ensure their devices meet expected safety standards. The case also highlights that liability can be established even when a product is being used in an entirely ordinary and appropriate manner.