



Introducing our new IIRSM and CPD - approved Health, Safety and Welfare Series

Incidents are rarely caused by one failure. They typically occur when governance, control and behaviour are disconnected.



Health Safety and Welfare for Executives

The biggest misunderstanding in many organisations is that health and safety is just an operational function — it is not.

Find out more [here](#)



Health Safety and Welfare for Managers and Supervisors

If executives set direction, managers and supervisors make it work. They turn policy into practical control.

Find out more [here](#)



Health Safety and Welfare for the Workforce

The workforce are not the cause of safety problems, they are often the last opportunity to prevent injury and harm.

Find out more [here](#)

Our new Health, Safety and Welfare Series is designed to align leadership, management and workforce responsibilities into one coherent system — from boardroom governance, to practical risk control, to safe behaviours at the point of work.

Rather than treating safety as a standalone topic, these IIRSM and CPD-approved courses connect direction, control and action, helping organisations move beyond compliance towards consistent, resilient performance at every level.



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Major hydrocarbon release caused by poorly maintained pipework

Summary

A large offshore oil and gas operator has been fined after failing to properly maintain pipework over a prolonged period, leading to a major hydrocarbon release that put more than 170 workers at risk of fire and explosion.

What Happened

The incident occurred on an offshore installation in the North Sea, where deteriorated pipework allowed hydrocarbon fluids to escape, forming a potentially explosive and flammable atmosphere. The release involved a large quantity of crude oil and gas within a confined concrete leg of the platform.

In addition to the pipework failure, ventilation fans designed to prevent, control or mitigate the effects of escaped hydrocarbon gas did not function as intended because they had not been adequately maintained. This contributed to the scale of the release and increased the potential consequences.

The Investigation

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the pipework involved had been installed for short-term use and was due to be removed several years earlier. Instead, it remained in service for seven years without being properly maintained, during which time it suffered significant corrosion damage. The investigation identified serious deficiencies in the company's safety management system. The failure of the corroded pipework led to an uncontrolled release of approximately 200kg of gas and 1,550kg of crude

oil, making it the largest uncontrolled hydrocarbon release on the UK Continental Shelf reported to the HSE in that year. Ventilation extract and supply fans, which were critical safety systems intended to reduce the risk of fire and explosion, were also inadequately maintained, further exacerbating the risk to the 176 personnel on board the installation.

The Outcome

The company pleaded guilty to two charges under the Offshore Installations (Prevention of Fire and Explosion, and Emergency Response) Regulations 1995. After considering mitigating factors, the court imposed a fine of £560,000.



Pool with the corrosion failure identified

Free Downloadable Resources

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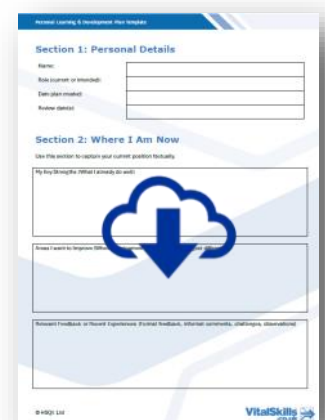
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Rofer sentenced for failing to co-operate with HSE investigation

Summary

A self-employed roofer has been sentenced after failing to comply with legal requests for information made by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) during an investigation into unsafe work at height.

What Happened

The HSE received concerns after workers were observed carrying out roof replacement work on a domestic property without scaffolding in place. An HSE inspector attended the site in Cornwall and identified unsafe work at height. As a result, a prohibition notice was served, preventing further work until suitable safety measures were in place.

The Investigation

Following the issue of the prohibition notice, the HSE made a formal request for further information under Section 20 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The individual failed to comply with this request. The investigation found that the individual continued to carry out roofing work without scaffolding, in direct contravention of the prohibition notice. The HSE also reported that the inspector was subjected to verbal abuse during the course of their duties. The individual failed to attend court hearings, resulting in a warrant being issued for his arrest.

The Outcome

The individual pleaded guilty to breaching Section 20(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He was fined £400 and ordered to pay £3,852 in costs.

The court also approved an application by the HSE requiring the individual to provide the information previously requested under Section 20 of the Act. A deadline was set for compliance.

Additional Context

HSE guidance makes clear that individuals and businesses must co-operate with inspections and investigations. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.

The HSE defines work-related violence as any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. This includes verbal abuse and threats, whether face to face, online or by telephone.

Key Learning Points

- Work at height must be properly planned and controlled. Suitable access equipment, such as scaffolding with edge protection, should be in place before roof work begins.
- Prohibition notices must be complied with immediately. Continuing work in breach of a prohibition notice is a serious criminal offence and will significantly aggravate enforcement action.
- Duty holders must co-operate with HSE inspectors. Section 20 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 gives inspectors the power to require information. Failure to comply is itself an offence.
- Professional conduct is essential during inspections. Abusive or aggressive behaviour towards inspectors may constitute work-related violence and can result in additional consequences.
- Safety culture starts with attitude. A willingness to engage with regulators, follow safe systems of work, and respect legal requirements is fundamental to protecting workers and the public.

Walker seriously injured in cattle attack on public footpath

Summary

A 75-year-old man suffered serious injuries after being attacked by cows with calves while walking his dog on a public footpath in Cornwall. The farmer responsible has been prosecuted following an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

What Happened

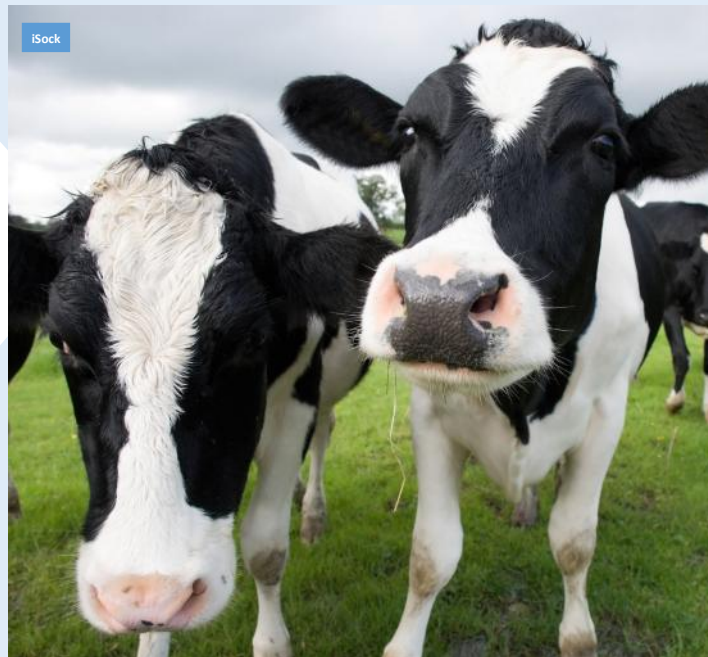
On 30 June 2024, a 75-year-old man was walking his dog along the South West Coast Path at Park Head near Porthcothan, Cornwall, while on a caravanning holiday.

As he passed through a field, he was suddenly attacked by a herd of cattle with calves. He released his dog's lead in an attempt to reduce the risk, but was still trampled and butted by the cattle. Passing walkers assisted him, and he managed to return to his caravan where an ambulance was called. He spent five days in hospital and sustained multiple serious injuries, including a severed artery, horn wounds and deep gashes down to the bone, requiring surgery.

The Investigation

An investigation by the HSE found that cattle with young calves – known to be particularly protective and unpredictable – were being kept in a field crossed by a public right of way. The farmer was informed of the attack on the same day it occurred. Despite this, rather than removing the cattle, additional cows and calves were added to the herd, increasing the risk to members of the public. Some of the calves were as young as 42 days old.

Approximately one month later, two local residents walking their dogs along the same stretch of the South West Coast Path were also attacked by the same herd. They narrowly avoided serious injury by sheltering in gorse bushes near a cliff edge, although one dog required surgery after being injured. The farmer was again informed of the incident but only removed the cattle four days later, after being instructed to do so by a local authority public rights of way officer. The investigation also established that alternative enclosed fields without public access were available and could have been used to house the cattle and calves.



The Outcome

The farmer pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The court imposed a fine of £5,260, £4,650 in prosecution costs and a £2,000 court surcharge

Additional Context

HSE guidance AIS17 'Cattle and public access in England and Wales' highlights the significant risks posed by cattle, particularly cows with calves, where public access is permitted. The guidance recommends that farmers:

- Avoid placing cattle, especially cows with calves, in fields with public access wherever possible
- Take all reasonably practicable steps to separate livestock from the public, including fencing
- Assess cattle temperament before allowing public access
- Remove any animal that has shown signs of aggression
- Clearly signpost public routes and provide warning signage about livestock present

The HSE has emphasised that cattle can become aggressive very quickly when calves are present and that earlier action could have prevented serious injury.

Key Learning Points

- Cows with calves present a heightened and well-known risk to members of the public, particularly dog walkers
- Public rights of way through farmland must be actively risk assessed and managed
- Previous incidents and near misses must trigger immediate action
- Alternative fields without public access should be used where reasonably practicable
- Clear signage and physical separation are essential where livestock and the public may come into contact
- Failure to act after incidents significantly increases the risk of serious injury and prosecution

More Information

See: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais17ew.htm>

Property developer fined for repeated construction safety failures

Summary

A Cheshire-based property developer has been fined £45,000 after multiple health and safety failures were identified at a construction site in Manchester, following repeated enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

What Happened

During a site inspection in November 2023 at a housing development in Manchester, inspectors identified numerous serious health and safety failings. These included missing edge protection on first-floor landings, damaged or absent security fencing, a lack of fire alarms and fire extinguishers, heavily obstructed walkways, and inadequate welfare facilities for workers.

The Investigation

As a result of the inspection, four Improvement Notices were served, requiring action to bring the site into legal compliance and to protect workers and members of the public. Further investigation revealed a poor history of health and safety management. Between February 2021 and March 2023, there had been four previous visits to the company's construction sites, all resulting in enforcement action for inadequate standards. Despite warnings and advice from inspectors, the company repeatedly failed to fulfil its duties as principal contractor.

The investigation concluded that the company had not effectively planned, managed, or monitored construction work, as required under construction health and safety legislation.

The Outcome

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. It was fined £45,000 and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £18,000 and costs of £6,297.

Additional Context

Principal contractors are legally responsible for ensuring construction work is properly planned, managed, and monitored to prevent risks to health and safety. This includes maintaining safe access routes, effective fire precautions, suitable welfare facilities, and adequate protection against falls from height.

Repeated failures and disregard for enforcement action significantly increase the likelihood of prosecution and substantial financial penalties.

Key Learning Points

- Principal contractors must actively plan, manage, and monitor construction work to control risks.
- Repeated non-compliance and failure to act on Improvement Notices is likely to lead to prosecution.
- Basic site controls such as edge protection, fire safety measures, clear walkways, and welfare facilities are legal requirements, not optional extras.
- A poor enforcement history will be taken into account when determining penalties.

More Information

Further guidance on managing health and safety in construction is available on the Health and Safety Executive website under Managing health and safety in construction (CDM): <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l153.htm>

Unregistered gas fitter sentenced

Summary

An unregistered gas fitter has been sentenced after carrying out illegal gas work at a house in Torquay that left the property in an immediately dangerous condition.

What happened

The man attended a property where he removed an old boiler and installed a new one. Following the installation, the boiler did not work properly. The homeowners arranged for another company to check the installation. When this plumber attended, they had serious concerns and called the emergency gas provider, who found a gas leak on the gas supply pipe and classified the situation as 'immediately dangerous', capping the gas supply.

Gas Safe Register was called and attended the site, where they found further defects in the gas boiler installation. A third company was employed by the homeowners to rectify the faults.

The investigation

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that he was not registered with the Gas Safe Register, which is a legal requirement.

The outcome

The man pleaded not guilty to contravening Sections 3(3), 26(1) and 27(1) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, ordered to undertake 150 hours unpaid work and to pay costs of £1,000.

Fatal exposure to hydrogen sulphide gas

Summary

A Cumbria-based manufacturer has been fined £200,000 after a worker died following exposure to hydrogen sulphide gas at a factory site. A second individual was also overcome while attempting to assist.

What Happened

On 24 December 2021, a worker was found collapsed in a pump room at a manufacturing site in Wigton, Cumbria, after being exposed to hydrogen sulphide gas. A delivery driver who attempted to help was also overcome by the gas.

Both men were rescued from the area. The delivery driver recovered quickly, but the employee was taken to hospital and tragically died the following day, on Christmas Day. A subsequent inquest concluded that, on the balance of probabilities, hydrogen sulphide exposure had contributed to his death.

The Investigation

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive found that the company had failed to adequately risk assess its production process. While hydrogen sulphide had been identified and controlled within the main production area, the assessment did not recognise that the gas could enter the site's water effluent and drainage system as a by-product of the process. This meant hydrogen sulphide was able to accumulate within the drainage system and be released from drains, creating an uncontrolled exposure risk for anyone entering the affected area.



The building with the pitched roof is the pumphouse, where the man was found.

The Outcome

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. It was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay £20,000 in costs.

Additional Context

Hydrogen sulphide is a colourless gas with a characteristic smell of rotten eggs. It is highly toxic and can quickly overwhelm the sense of smell at higher concentrations, removing any warning of danger. Health effects can range from eye irritation and dizziness to rapid loss of consciousness and death.

HSE guidance requires employers to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments and to implement effective control measures to reduce exposure to substances hazardous to health to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable. This includes considering all potential pathways by which hazardous substances may be released or accumulate.

Key Learning Points

- Risk assessments must consider all parts of a process, including by-products and unintended pathways such as drainage and effluent systems.
- Hazardous substances can accumulate in hidden or confined areas, creating serious risks even where primary controls appear adequate.
- Drainage systems and pump rooms should be treated as potential confined spaces where toxic gas build-up may occur.
- Employers must ensure that COSHH assessments are reviewed and updated when processes, systems, or conditions change.
- Failure to fully identify and control exposure routes to hazardous substances can have fatal consequences for workers and others on site.



More Information

HSE guidance on Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) can be found at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/>

Legislation referred to in this article can be viewed at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found at: <https://sentencingcouncil.org.uk/resources/guideline-history/health-and-safety-offences-corporate-manslaughter-and-food-safety-and-hygiene-offences/>

Health Safety & Welfare for Executives

The biggest misunderstanding in many organisations is that health and safety is just an operational function — it is not.

At its core, it is a governance responsibility. Incidents often trace back to decisions made far away from the work activity:

- Under-resourcing
- Unrealistic deadlines
- Contractor selection
- Maintenance deferral
- Production pressure
- Poor competence planning

Executives rarely cause accidents directly, but they frequently create the conditions in which accidents become inevitable.

This course addresses a specific issue: board members are legally accountable for risk, yet often do not understand how risk is created inside their organisation.

So the course helps leaders to:

- Understand legal accountability
- Interpret organisational risk
- Ask for meaningful safety information (not vanity statistics)
- Use audits and evidence correctly
- Shape culture through decisions, not slogans

The shift occurs when compliance leadership becomes risk leadership. Without clear direction from the top, the rest of the system cannot function.

Find out more: [here](#)

Health Safety & Welfare for Managers & Supervisors

If executives set direction, managers and supervisors make it work. They turn policy into practical control.

Most organisations already have procedures. Incidents occur when those procedures are not properly applied in the workplace:

- Generic risk assessments
- Shortcuts becoming normal practice
- Production pressure overriding safety
- Unclear instructions
- Inadequate supervision

This course addresses the implementation gap — the space between written rules and real working conditions.

So the course helps managers and supervisors to:

- Understand their legal duties
- Carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments
- Apply the hierarchy of control
- Implement safe systems of work
- Investigate incidents to identify causes
- Monitor performance using indicators and audits

Safety improves when risk is actively managed, not simply documented. Managers and supervisors connect leadership decisions to safe working conditions.

Find out more: [here](#)

Health Safety & Welfare for the Workforce

Workers operate at the point where risk finally appears. By the time someone is exposed to harm, earlier safeguards have usually failed. They are not the cause of safety problems, but the last opportunity to prevent injury.

People cannot work safely unless they understand both the hazards and the controls:

- Unrecognised hazards
- Incorrect equipment use
- Misunderstood instructions
- Shortcuts to save time
- Unsafe habits becoming routine

This course addresses a common issue: workers are often told what to do, but not why it matters. So the course helps the workforce to:

- Recognise workplace hazards
- Understand their responsibilities
- Follow safe systems of work and permits
- Use equipment and PPE correctly
- Report unsafe conditions
- Support a positive safety culture

Safety becomes effective when everyone understands their role. When workers understand the purpose of controls, they are more likely to follow them and challenge unsafe situations.

Find out more: [here](#)

The thinking behind our latest courses: governance → control → behaviour

Wall collapse knocks worker through unprotected stairwell

Summary

A construction company has been fined £60,000 after an employee was seriously injured when a wall collapsed, knocking him through an unprotected stairwell opening onto a concrete floor below.

What Happened

The incident occurred on 25 April 2024 at a construction site in Milnthorpe, Cumbria. At the end of the working day, a general labourer was sweeping dust and debris from the first floor of the building. Earlier that day, boards had been delivered and laid across a large floor opening where a staircase was due to be installed. The boards did not fully cover the opening and no edge protection had been installed around the remaining gap. There was also no signage warning of the danger, and the worker had received no instructions regarding safe working around the area.

While sweeping along the boards, a newly built wall adjacent to the opening collapsed. The collapse knocked the worker over the unprotected edge, causing him to fall approximately 2.5 to 3 metres onto the concrete floor below.

The worker sustained multiple fractures and a dislocated shoulder and spent around a month in hospital recovering from his injuries.

The Investigation

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the risk of falling through the floor opening had not

been adequately addressed. No preventative measures were in place to prevent a fall, and the worker had not been informed of the risks or the controls required when working in the area. The investigation also identified that no site supervisor or manager was present at the time of the incident, and the work had not been properly planned or monitored.

The Outcome

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 by failing to ensure that suitable and sufficient measures were taken, so far as was reasonably practicable, to prevent a person working at height from falling a distance likely to cause personal injury. The company was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay £4,799.44 in costs, along with a £2,000 victim surcharge.

Additional Context

HSE guidance on working at height makes clear that employers must take precautions to prevent falls from height, including falls through floor openings. This includes the use of suitable edge protection, secure coverings, clear warning signage, and effective supervision.

HSE inspectors emphasised that work at height is inherently high risk and requires proper planning, training, and implementation of control measures. Incidents of this nature are entirely preventable when basic safety standards are applied.

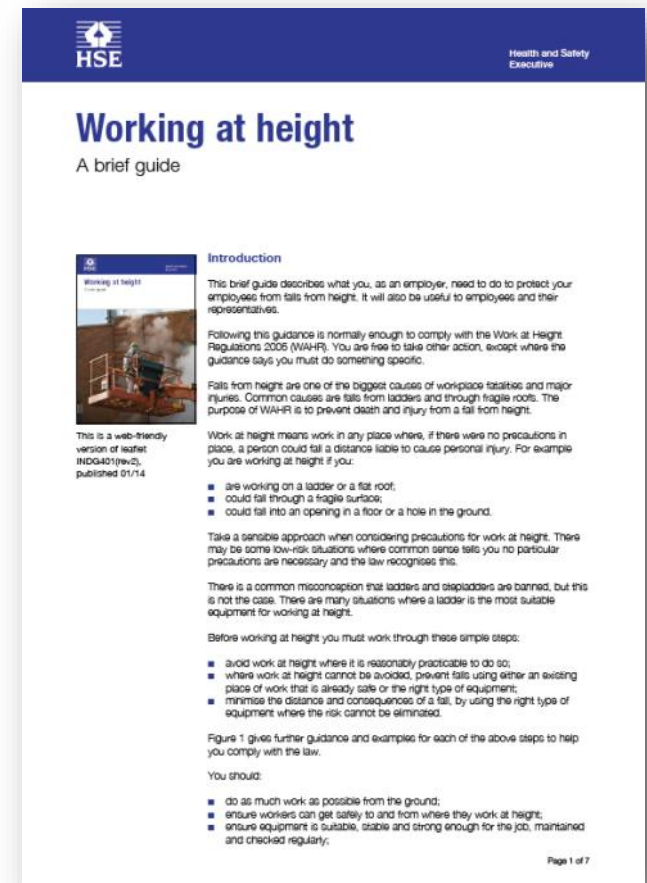
Key Learning Points

- Floor openings must be fully covered or protected with suitable edge protection at all times.
- Temporary measures, such as loose boards, are not adequate controls unless they are secure and cover the entire hazard.

- Workers must be clearly informed of risks and provided with instructions on safe working arrangements.
- Effective supervision is essential, particularly at the end of the working day when tasks such as cleaning are carried out.
- Proper planning and risk assessment for work at height can prevent serious injuries and potentially fatal incidents.

More Information

More information about safe working at height can be accessed at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.htm>



Construction company and director fined for repeated safety failures

Summary

A London-based construction company and its director have been fined after repeatedly failing to comply with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) enforcement notices and for not adequately planning, managing and monitoring construction work.

What Happened

The company was appointed as contractor for the conversion of a former public house and adjoining building into residential flats in London.

During a proactive site visit in September 2022, inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive identified several serious concerns, including risks associated with work at height and doubts over the competence of site management.

As a result, Prohibition and Improvement Notices were issued requiring immediate and longer-term action to address the risks.



The Investigation

Further HSE visits over the following 12 months identified additional breaches of health and safety law. These inspections demonstrated a continued failure to plan, manage and monitor construction work effectively, despite previous enforcement action.

Additional Prohibition and Improvement Notices were served. The investigation concluded that both the company and its director had failed to comply with multiple enforcement notices and had not ensured work was carried out safely.

The Outcome

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 15(2) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and to two offences of failing to comply with Prohibition Notices under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act. It was fined £7,200 and ordered to pay £900 in costs.

The company director also pleaded guilty to offences under Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, on the basis that the breaches were committed with his consent, connivance, or were attributable to his neglect. He was fined £10,800 and ordered to pay £900 in costs.

Following the hearing, an HSE inspector said the fines should send a clear message that failures to comply with enforcement notices will be taken extremely seriously, and that action will be taken against both companies and individuals who fail to protect health and safety.

Additional Context

Contractors have a legal duty to plan, manage and monitor construction work so that it can be carried out without risks to health or safety. Enforcement notices are issued to prevent

serious harm, and failure to comply with them significantly increases the likelihood of prosecution.

Key Learning Points

- Enforcement notices must be taken seriously and complied with promptly and fully.
- Repeated failures to address identified risks significantly increase enforcement action.
- Directors can be personally prosecuted where health and safety failings are due to their consent, connivance or neglect.
- Effective planning, management and monitoring are fundamental duties under CDM regulations.
- Proactive inspections often follow up on previous concerns, not just individual incidents.



More Information

Further guidance on managing health and safety in construction can be found on the HSE website, including information on the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l153.htm>

Pedestrian seriously injured by collapsing lamppost

Summary

A local authority has been fined after a member of the public sustained life-changing injuries when a street lighting column collapsed in a busy residential area. The incident followed a failure to adequately assess and manage the risks posed by ageing infrastructure.



The corroded lamppost following the collapse

What Happened

The incident occurred just after 4pm on a weekday afternoon in June 2023. A man was standing at the roadside speaking with a colleague when a lamp-post suddenly collapsed, striking him from behind and pinning him to the ground.

As the column lay across the carriageway, overhead cables attached to it were snagged by a passing vehicle, dragging the fallen lamp-post over the injured man. The area was busy at the time, with both adult and child pedestrians nearby due to it being a school day.

The man sustained severe, life-threatening and life-changing injuries, including multiple spinal, pelvic and rib fractures, an open leg fracture, and a fractured ankle. He spent seven weeks in hospital, has undergone multiple surgeries, and continues to receive medical treatment. He now lives with reduced mobility and significant ongoing pain.

Prior to the incident, he had a high level of fitness and led a very active lifestyle.

The Investigation

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the lamp-post had failed due to severe corrosion at its base. Testing showed a loss of steel thickness of at least 60 per cent, with some areas suffering significantly greater deterioration.

The column, manufactured in the 1950s or 1960s, was more than twice its expected service life of 20–25 years. Although it had been identified during an inspection as being in poor condition and scheduled for replacement at a later date, the inspection regime failed to recognise the true extent of corrosion and the immediate risk of collapse.

The investigation also found that visual inspections alone were inadequate and that established industry guidance on prioritising the removal of high-risk lighting columns had not been followed.

The Outcome

The local authority pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The court imposed a fine of £80,000.

Additional Context

Following the incident, other similar lighting columns with decorative base features were removed as a precaution, and street lighting maintenance procedures were updated to improve risk identification and management for ageing infrastructure.

Key Learning Points

- Ageing public infrastructure can present a serious and immediate risk if not properly assessed.
- Visual inspections alone may be insufficient to identify hidden or advanced corrosion.
- Assets identified as being in poor condition should be prioritised based on the potential consequences of failure.
- Inspection regimes must align with recognised industry guidance and good practice.
- Duty holders must have effective systems in place to manage risks to members of the public, not just employees.

More Information

More information about the legislation referred to in this case is available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

Worker struck by 4.5-ton machine during relocation

Summary

A paper packaging manufacturer has been fined after a worker sustained life-changing injuries when a 4.5-ton machine fell and struck him on the head during a lifting operation.

What Happened

On 31 October 2023, a 39-year-old employee was part of a team relocating a large industrial machine at a site in East Kilbride. The machine, weighing approximately 4.5 tonnes and measuring 1.56 by 4.15 metres, was being moved from a warehouse to a storage area around 160 metres away. The machine had no designated lifting or anchoring points. Workers improvised a method of lifting it with a forklift truck, placing skates underneath and pulling it forward. The machine had already slid off the forks on at least two occasions before the incident.

At the time of the accident, the employee was positioned underneath the suspended machine to secure a wheel on its underside. The machine slid from the forks and struck him on the head. He sustained a severe skull fracture, head bruising and nerve damage to the left side of his face. The injuries have resulted in permanent double vision, loss of peripheral vision, facial palsy and hearing loss. He is now unable to drive and has undergone multiple surgeries, alongside receiving ongoing mental health support.

The Investigation

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive found that the lifting operation had not been properly planned or supervised by a competent person.

The characteristics of the load — including its weight, size, centre of gravity and lack of lifting points — had not been adequately assessed. No suitable and sufficient safe system of work had been developed. Moving a machine of this size and weight was not a routine activity at the site, and there was no established procedure in place to manage such an operation.

The Outcome

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 8(1)(a) and (c) of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998. The company was fined £433,333 and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £32,500.

Additional Context

Regulation 8 of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 requires that every lifting operation is properly planned by a competent person, appropriately supervised, and carried out in a safe manner. Improvised lifting arrangements, particularly where loads lack suitable lifting points and where there is uncertainty around stability or centre of gravity, present significant risk. Repeated warning signs — such as a load slipping during earlier attempts — should prompt an immediate review and reassessment of the method being used.

Key Learning Points

- Plan lifting operations properly – All lifting activities must be planned by a competent person, especially where tasks are non-routine.
- Assess the load characteristics – Weight, dimensions, centre of gravity and lifting points must be understood before any lifting takes place.
- Avoid improvised systems – Ad-hoc arrangements using unsuitable equipment significantly increase the risk of catastrophic failure.

- Stop when warning signs appear – If a load slips or behaves unpredictably, work should cease immediately and the method reassessed.
- Protect people from suspended loads – Workers should never position themselves beneath suspended or unstable loads.



NHS Trust fined after staff developed hand-arm vibration conditions

Summary

An NHS Trust has been fined £40,000 after several employees developed Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) due to prolonged exposure to vibrating work equipment.

What Happened

The Trust was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after an employee was diagnosed with HAVS, a serious and irreversible condition.

HAVS is characterised by persistent numbness and tingling in the fingers, reduced sensory perception and impaired manual dexterity. Over time, it can significantly affect a person's ability to carry out both work-related tasks and everyday activities.

The HSE investigation identified that several employees had been diagnosed with HAVS, and one had been diagnosed with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS), following prolonged exposure to vibration from tools used at work.

One long-serving employee, who had worked in the plaster-cast department for more than 25 years, described how she had never been warned about the risks associated with vibration exposure.

After her diagnosis of advanced stage 3 vascular and sensorineural HAVS, she was no longer able to continue in her role and has remained off work since October 2023.

The Investigation

The HSE found that the Trust had failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks arising from the use of vibrating tools.

There were no records demonstrating the level of vibration exposure employees faced. The Trust also failed to eliminate exposure, or reduce it to as low as reasonably practicable. In addition, employees had not been provided with suitable and sufficient information, instruction or training regarding the risks associated with vibration exposure.

The investigation further identified that the Trust failed to report two cases of HAVS and one case of CTS, as required under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

The HSE concluded that the Trust had failed to properly assess and control the risks associated with hand-arm vibration, exposing staff to the risk of lifelong ill health.

The Outcome

The Trust pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. It was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay £4,911 in prosecution costs.

A HSE Inspector stated that the fine should underline to employers that expose workers to vibration that both the courts and the HSE take such failures extremely seriously and will not hesitate to take enforcement action where appropriate.

Additional Context

HAVS is a preventable but irreversible condition caused by regular and prolonged exposure to vibration from tools such as

grinders, sanders, drills and cutting equipment.

Symptoms can include:

- Tingling and numbness in the fingers
- Loss of grip strength
- Reduced sensitivity to touch and temperature
- Episodes of 'vibration white finger' where circulation is restricted

Employers must assess vibration exposure, compare it against action and limit values, implement control measures, and provide health surveillance where required.

Key Learning Points

- Assess vibration risks properly – Carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments for vibrating tools.
- Measure and record exposure – Maintain records to demonstrate compliance with exposure action and limit values.
- Reduce exposure – Eliminate vibration where reasonably practicable or reduce it to as low as reasonably practicable.
- Provide training and information – Ensure workers understand the risks, symptoms and control measures.
- Implement health surveillance – Identify early signs of HAVS to prevent progression.

More Information

Further guidance is available from the HSE on managing vibration risks at work: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/hav/advice-to-employers.htm>

More general information is available on the HSE vibration website at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/index.htm>

For more about RIDDOR see: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>

Holiday camp operator fined after three-year-old nearly drowns during pool session

Summary

A company operating children’s holiday camps has been fined after a three-year-old girl was found unconscious in a swimming pool during a free-play session.



What Happened

The incident occurred on 26 July 2023, when a holiday camp operator was running a children’s activity session.

The three-year-old girl was part of a group of 19 children aged between three and five taking part in a free-play swimming session. Most of the children were non-swimmers, including the child involved in the incident.

Before entering the pool, staff fitted the child with two sets of armbands and provided a foam noodle. Several floats were present in the pool, including a large rocket-shaped inflatable float.

During the session, the child became trapped underneath the large float. She was found face down in the water and was not breathing. When discovered, she was no longer wearing the armbands or using the noodle.

Staff intervened and successfully resuscitated her.

The Investigation

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company’s documentation relating to pool safety and supervision lacked sufficient detail and clarity. The investigation also established that this documentation had not been effectively communicated to staff. As a result, appropriate control measures were not fully understood or properly implemented.

The Outcome

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

It was fined £6,000 and ordered to pay £12,000 in costs.

Additional Context

- HSE guidance on swimming pool management highlights the importance of effective supervision arrangements, particularly when young or non-swimming children are involved. This includes:
 - Suitable adult-to-child supervision ratios
 - Clear rules regarding the use of floats and inflatable equipment
 - Robust risk assessments for free-play sessions
 - Effective emergency procedures to ensure immediate response

Key Learning Points

- Free-play sessions still require structured control measures – Informal activity does not remove the need for detailed risk assessment and defined supervision standards.
- Documentation must be clear and actionable – Policies that lack clarity are unlikely to be implemented effectively in practice.
- Communication is as important as documentation – Safety arrangements must be clearly understood by all staff involved.
- Control of floats and inflatables is essential – Large pool equipment can introduce entrapment risks, particularly for young or non-swimming children.
- Emergency preparedness saves lives – Immediate identification and response were critical in preventing a fatal outcome in this case.

More Information

Further guidance on managing swimming pool safety can be found on the HSE website at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/leisure/swimming-pool.htm>

Illegal waste “super sites” raise concerns across England

Summary

Hundreds of illegal waste sites are operating across England, including at least 11 large-scale “super sites” containing more than 20,000 tonnes of rubbish. Despite hundreds of closures in the past year, more than 500 illegal dumps remain active, prompting concern from residents, campaigners and policymakers.

What Is Happening?

Data released by the Environment Agency shows that 743 illegal waste sites were shut down in 2024/25, including 143 classified as high risk. However, 517 sites were still active at the end of the reporting period.

Among the largest known sites are:

- Northwich, Cheshire – approximately 280,000 tonnes
- Camborne, Cornwall – 50,000 tonnes
- Burnley, Lancashire – 25,000 and 50,000 tonnes
- Sittingbourne, Kent – 36,000 tonnes
- Fakenham, Norfolk – originally 35,000 tonnes

Dumping activity has reportedly been halted at four of these sites, but none have yet been cleared.

Most illegal sites are located in rural areas, often on agricultural land and concealed from main roads. Organised criminal groups are believed to be behind many operations, offering waste disposal services at significantly lower rates than licensed operators.

Legitimate landfill operators charge site fees based on waste type and volume, and landfill tax currently exceeds £126 per tonne. By contrast, illegal operators avoid these costs, generating substantial illicit profits.

Organised Crime and Wider Enforcement Activity

Police forces, including West Mercia Police, have linked illegal waste operations to organised crime networks. Investigations have involved suspected money laundering and other financial offences.

Recent enforcement activity across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire led to the seizure of nearly £100,000 in cash, along with firearms and suspected counterfeit goods.

Transparency and Oversight

The scale of the issue became more widely known following a data request under the Environmental Information Regulations. The Environment Agency acknowledged that available figures may not represent every site, as complete data is not held for all locations.

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) has stated that it is providing additional funding and officers to strengthen waste crime enforcement, alongside tougher sentencing measures.

A Dynamic Enforcement Challenge

Officials note that waste crime presents an ongoing challenge: while hundreds of sites are closed each year, new sites continue to emerge.

The issue raises broader questions around:

- Environmental protection and land remediation

- Public health and air quality impacts
- Floodplain and watercourse contamination risks
- Rural crime and organised criminal activity
- Costs to legitimate businesses and taxpayers

Addressing illegal waste dumping will likely require coordinated enforcement, improved regulatory oversight, land remediation strategies and continued public reporting.

Key Learning Points

- Illegal waste activity remains widespread, with hundreds of sites still active across England.
- Large-scale “super sites” can contain tens or hundreds of thousands of tonnes of waste.
- Organised crime groups are frequently linked to waste crime and associated financial offences.
- Environmental impacts include fires, odours, landscape damage and potential water contamination.
- Enforcement agencies are increasing activity, but the problem remains dynamic and persistent.

More Information

BBC article ‘Hundreds of illegal waste tips operating in England - including 11 super sites’.

See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1ev4yg1j1lo>

BBC article ‘Three arrested over illegal tip near national park’

See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c93v9kw5z4po>

BBC article ‘Massive illegal rubbish dump found near motorway’

See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c20dqgdrzgo>

BBC article ‘Anger as illegal waste dumps appear near homes’.

See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c74x9gqynp9o>

US climate rule reversed as federal policy shifts

Summary

The US administration has moved to reverse a landmark 2009 scientific ruling that classified greenhouse gases as a threat to public health. The decision, which has formed the legal basis for federal climate regulation for more than a decade, is expected to trigger legal challenges and reshape environmental policy across multiple sectors.

What Has Happened?

The 2009 “endangerment finding”, introduced during the presidency of Barack Obama, concluded that six key greenhouse gases — including carbon dioxide and methane — posed a danger to human health. The finding, issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), became the legal foundation for federal regulation of emissions from vehicles, power plants, oil and gas operations, aircraft and landfill methane.

President Donald Trump has now reversed that determination, describing it as economically damaging and stating that removing it will reduce regulatory burdens and lower costs for consumers and manufacturers. The White House has characterised the move as a major deregulation effort, arguing that it will reduce costs for vehicle manufacturers by an estimated \$2,400 per vehicle and generate wider economic savings.

Legal and Policy Implications

The 2009 finding has been central to US climate policy for over a decade. Without it, the EPA’s authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under existing federal law may be

significantly limited. Legal analysts suggest the reversal is likely to be challenged in court. Some observers believe the administration may seek a definitive ruling from the US Supreme Court to settle the legal position before the end of the presidential term.

There are also potential implications for state-level environmental regulations. Previously, the federal position was used both to prevent stricter state standards in certain circumstances and to limit climate-related lawsuits brought by individuals and organisations. If the federal framework changes, states and advocacy groups may pursue new legal routes through state courts.

Economic Arguments

Supporters of the reversal argue that climate regulations have increased production costs, contributed to higher vehicle prices and encouraged manufacturing to move overseas. Some former federal officials contend that shifting production abroad does not necessarily reduce global emissions if manufacturing takes place in jurisdictions with weaker environmental controls.

The administration estimates overall economic savings exceeding \$1 trillion if related regulations are withdrawn. However, environmental groups dispute these figures. Analysts from the Environmental Defence Fund argue that less stringent vehicle standards could increase long-term fuel costs for consumers and worsen public health outcomes.

Scientific Debate

The decision has also revived debate about the scientific basis for regulating greenhouse gases.

A recent review commissioned by the US Department of

Energy questioned aspects of widely accepted climate science. Critics have argued that the panel responsible for the report was not representative of mainstream scientific opinion, and a federal judge has since ruled that the process used to establish the panel breached legal requirements. The extent to which this report will influence future court proceedings remains uncertain.

Wider Context

The endangerment finding has underpinned US greenhouse gas regulation since 2009. Its reversal marks a significant shift in federal climate policy and could affect:

- Vehicle emission standards
- Power generation regulation
- Oil and gas sector controls
- Methane regulation
- Aviation emissions

The outcome of anticipated legal challenges will determine whether the reversal becomes a lasting change or is overturned through the courts.

Key Learning Points

- Regulatory frameworks often rest on foundational legal determinations that shape policy across multiple sectors.
- Changes in political leadership can lead to significant shifts in environmental governance.
- Economic, environmental and public health considerations frequently intersect in climate policy debates.
- Legal challenge and judicial review play a central role in determining the durability of regulatory change.
- Organisations operating internationally must monitor regulatory developments, as policy shifts can influence supply chains, manufacturing decisions and compliance obligations.

Safeguarding record-keeping concerns raised following inquest

Summary

A coroner has warned that inconsistencies in how safeguarding records are managed across schools could create risks to children if important information is not properly recorded when staff move between organisations.

What Happened

An inquest was held into the death of a 16-year-old pupil in Suffolk in April 2024. The teenager died near her home during the Easter holidays, and the coroner concluded she intended to take her own life.

She had been a boarding pupil at an independent school. The inquest determined that the school's record-keeping arrangements were not a direct cause of the death. However, the investigation highlighted issues relating to how safeguarding information had been documented.

Findings From the Inquest

The coroner issued a Prevention of Future Deaths report (PFDR), which is used to highlight risks that could contribute to similar tragedies in the future.

Evidence presented during the hearing showed that:

- A digital safeguarding system was in place at the school.
- Appropriate action had been taken when concerns were raised by a parent.
- Some staff were not fully familiar or confident in using the system.
- Important safeguarding details were not always recorded.

Although this did not cause the death, the coroner concluded that in another situation such omissions could increase risk. The report also raised a broader concern across the education sector: schools and colleges use different safeguarding information systems. As teachers change employment, they must learn new processes and software, which may affect how consistently information is captured.

Response From the School

Following the inquest, the school stated it had introduced further training, issued additional guidance, enhanced system alerts, and established ongoing refresher training for staff. The statement also expressed condolences and support for those affected.

Wider Implications

The coroner highlighted that the absence of a single standardised safeguarding recording approach across education settings could lead to important information not being documented. This may occur when staff are unfamiliar

with new systems or processes after moving roles. The Department for Education has been asked to comment on the findings.

Key Learning Points

- Safeguarding systems are only effective if staff are confident and competent in using them.
- Staff changes or organisational transitions create elevated risk if procedures differ significantly.
- Training and refresher training are essential when introducing new safeguarding tools.
- Recording information is as important as taking action — undocumented concerns cannot be assessed later.
- Consistency and clarity in safeguarding processes can be a critical protective factor for vulnerable individuals.

More Information

The report can be accessed at:

<https://www.judiciary.uk/prevention-of-future-death-reports/georgia-scaff- prevention-of-future-deaths-report/>



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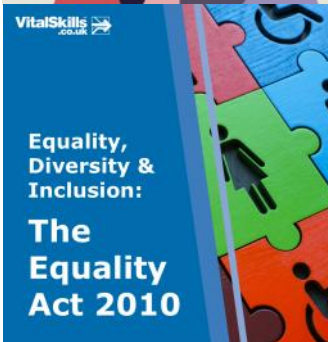


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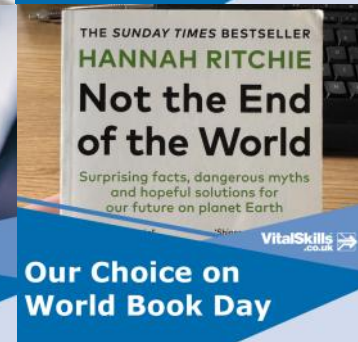


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