

PRB CONSULTING

Health & Safety Bulletin

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HEALTH & SAFETY

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HSE - Temperature at Work Ebulletin

Guidance on Working in Cold and Wintry Weather

Make sure you protect workers during low temperatures and wintry conditions.

As winter starts to take hold, you can find helpful advice from HSE on keeping people as comfortable as possible when working in the cold.

The HSE website offers information and guidance including:

- advice on how to protect workers in low temperatures
- clarity on what the law says about temperature in the workplace
- how you can assess the risks and put controls in place to protect workers

In addition, our workplace temperature checklist will help you carry out a basic risk assessment.



Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls

Darker evening and colder weather can increase the risk of slips, trips and falls in the workplace.

Protect your workers by considering the risks and putting measures in place to reduce them. Visit our website to:

- take a look at our online guide to avoiding slips and trips in winter weather
- get guidance on the steps you can take to prevent slips and trips
- access slips and trips resources, including HSE's downloadable leaflets and publications

Our general guidance on slips and trips also provides plenty of information and resources on how to avoid these accidents in and around the workplace.

Source: Health and Safety Executive



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- ✓ Time v Cost – An Effective solution
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Health and Safety Statistics 2024

HSE has published the latest statistics on work-related health and safety in Great Britain.

The annual figures (2023 to 2024) include:

- **1.7 million** working people suffering from a work-related illness, of which:
 - **776,000** workers suffering work-related stress, depression or anxiety
 - **543,000** workers suffering from a work-related musculoskeletal disorder
- **2,257** mesothelioma deaths due to past asbestos exposures (2022)
- **138** workers killed in work-related accidents
- **604,000** working people sustained an injury at work according to the Labour Force Survey
- **61,663** injuries to employees reported under RIDDOR
- **33.7** million working days lost due to work-related illness and workplace injury
- **£21.6** billion estimated cost of injuries and ill health from current working conditions (2022 to 2023)

The statistics release provides detailed commentary on these figures and is supported by:

- the statistics webpages, which include a range of information such as different types of work-related ill-health and different industry sectors
- a comprehensive set of tables, designed to make the data accessible to users
- our annual infographic-style summary booklet

Feedback on our statistics

We welcome feedback on our statistics. To provide this please visit our website.

UK Falls from Height Research Study

What is this about?

The No Falls Foundation has launched the first of its kind UK falls from height research study, aimed at anyone who has experienced, witnessed or investigated falls from height.



If that's you, then please consider taking part in our research. Your insight will contribute to a better understanding of the underlying causes and circumstances behind falls from height.



To access it, please click on one of the buttons below. They each lead to a version of the study that focuses on falls from height that happened either at work or at home

Why are we conducting this research?

No two falls from height are the same. However, different incidents can often share a cause, or some of its leading factors. For this reason, we're asking for your help to gather data on falls from height you've experienced, witnessed or investigated.

By studying your case alongside others, we can provide evidence to support changes in practices, standards and regulations that could lead to the prevention of future falls.

Today, most of the reporting on falls from height focuses on the types of incidents that happen rather than what causes them. So, despite statistics provided by the HSE and calls from the industry to introduce a simplified reporting system, we still lack a deeper understanding of the reasons behind falls from height.

The No Falls Foundation is working hand in hand with the Access Industry Forum and other industry members to change this. With more insights into the root causes of falls from height, we'll be in a stronger position to inform and drive the necessary changes.

Source: No Falls Foundation



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Safe Methods of Isolation of Platform Controls on Mobile Elevating Work Platforms

HSE has worked with the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF) to develop the following guidance on the safe methods of isolation of platform controls for mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs).

Background

HSE is investigating an incident involving a MEWP and found that when at height, the method of isolating the controls on the MEWP can introduce a hazard to the occupants of the platform. The investigation is ongoing.



The emergency stop control on the MEWP platform has been used in the powered access industry to achieve isolation of controls and/or power source when the MEWP has reached its place of work. This practice was first introduced on older machines, not designed to current standards, to reduce the risk of entrapment and inadvertent operation of controls.

As the standards have evolved and designs have changed, this practice may no longer be appropriate to reduce the risk as other methods are now used in control designs.

Safe isolation of the platform controls

The operator of a MEWP may be required to isolate the controls and/or power source using platform controls.

Where the machine is equipped with an 'engine on/off' control at the platform control console, this should be used to switch the engine off during normal operation rather than the emergency stop control, unless the manufacturer indicates that it would be unsafe to do so.

Where machines are not equipped with a dedicated 'on/off' control at the platform control console, the MEWP operator should follow the manufacturers' operating instructions as to how this should be achieved.

It is the user's responsibility to ensure the correct MEWP has been selected for the task, and that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been carried out and documented.

HSE's website has more information and advice on working safely with MEWPs.

Source: HSE.gov

£1 million Fine for 11m Fall Through Floor of Shipping Container Straddle Vehicle.

On 20 September 2022, a worker for DP World Southampton – performing maintenance tasks on the company’s shipping container straddle carrier vehicles. Unfortunately, the vehicle he was due to work on was missing its glass floor. As he stepped into the cab, he fell 11m to the concrete below, suffering life-changing injuries. HSE Inspectors explained how such a situation could happen, and how it could have been avoided.



The straddle carrier was due to have maintenance work, as well as have its glass floor replaced. Contractors were on site to replace the floor glass, and it was in the workshop to also be serviced.

The worker suffered life-altering injuries, including fractures to his skull, back, pelvis, arm, wrist and ankle. He was in hospital until October 21st, 2022, and continues to be under the care of a range of medical teams. He still has a long way to go in his recovery.

Failings

1. Failure to have systems in place to manage, monitor and supervise work by contractors and alert relevant employees to the presence of contractors on site.
2. Failure to identify through suitable and sufficient risk assessment the risks from different team teams working concurrently on straddle carriers on planned maintenance and glass replacement.
3. Failure to provide a documented safe system of work for concurrent working.
4. In view of glass replacement on straddle carriers being a frequently performed task, failure to conduct and record a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for glass replacement on straddle carriers.
5. Failure to provide a documented safe system of work for glass replacement on straddle carriers, including suitable and sufficient measures to control the risks of working at height.
6. Failure of the company to implement its own policies in relation to the use of permits to work

Prosecution

On 2 August 2024, at Southampton Magistrates’ Court, Southampton Container Terminals pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act. The company was fined £1 million and ordered to pay £11,664.59 in costs.

Source: IOSH



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Veolia ES's £3m Fine After 'Skirt Pile' Strike Causes Fatal Fall and Serious Injury

Recycling giant Veolia ES (UK) Limited has been prosecuted after multiple safety failures led to the death of a demolition operative at an onshore facility in Norfolk. Another demolition operative sustained life-changing injuries.

The operatives were undertaking enabling works as part of the decommissioning and dismantlement of offshore North Sea oil rig structures at an onshore facility in Great Yarmouth.



The pair had to remove a small overhanging piece of metal pipework – known in the industry as a skirt pile – from a decommissioned oil rig, which involved using oxy propane cutting equipment to 'hot cut' through skirt piles attached to a large metal structure known as 'a jacket'.

The enabling works required work at height, so the pair were operating from the basket of a mobile elevated work platform (MEWP).

However, as the 'hot cut' proceeded, the skirt pile, which weighed more than 27 tonnes, suddenly gave way. It fell vertically to the ground and tipped over, striking the MEWP with some force and both men were catapulted out of the basket, falling about 12 metres to the ground below.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation into the incident identified serious failures, both in the planning of the work as well as Veolia ES (UK) Limited's risk assessments. This, the HSE found, lacked detail and failed to identify all the necessary control measures.

Veolia ES (UK) Limited pleaded guilty to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act. At a sentencing hearing at Ipswich Crown Court, held on 22 July 2024, the recycling firm was handed a £3 million fine and was ordered to pay £60,000 in costs.

For this reason, the judge said this merited an increase in the starting point, which was £4.5 million. This figure took into consideration that Veolia ES (UK) Limited's turnover for the financial year ending 31 December 2022 was listed on Companies House as £1,555,275,000, which meant the defendant fell into the 'very large' category. The final £3 million fine reflects a reduction for mitigation and credit for its guilty plea.

Source: IOSH

National Grid Fined More than £3.2 million for Safety Failings

An employee of 4 Power Ltd was replacing step bolts on a pylon at Treforest Industrial Estate in Pontypridd when he received an electric shock of 33,000 volts which resulted in him sustaining burns to 40% of his body and nerve damage that affects mobility.

Justin Hollins was wearing a climbing harness and was left hanging on the pylon for some time before being rescued by his colleagues.

He had six operations during his first 10 days in hospital and then required 24-hour care for months afterwards.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that 4 Power Ltd failed to properly plan and assess the risk.

Had it done so, it would have identified that the arms of pylon were too short to do the work safely, while maintaining the specified safety distances according to the industry standard.

National Grid Electricity Distribution (South Wales) plc failed to ensure that the electricity was switched off in order for this work on the pylon to be conducted safely.

In the resulting prosecution, heard at Cardiff Crown Court, 4 Power Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching s.2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974, was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £14,123.

National Grid Electricity Distribution (South Wales) plc pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 14 of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, was fined £3.2 million and ordered to pay costs of £20,460.

Noting that Mr Hollins was lucky to have survived the incident, HSE Inspector Rhys Hughes said: “What is so frustrating in incidents like these is if a safe system of work had been in place before the incident, his injuries would have been prevented.”



Source: Croner-1



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Recent Court Cases - HSE

Failure to Establish a Safe Working Zone Left Worker Paralysed

A 21-metre tree being cut down by a contractor as part of an ash dieback clearance programme, fell the wrong way and struck a forestry worker leaving him with life-changing injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had failed to implement a safe working zone around the tree as it was being felled. This would normally have been twice the size of the tree, with only the felling operator permitted inside the zone.

LEGAL BREACHES	FINE	COURT COSTS
Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974	£1,000	£1,000

£900k Fine as Residents put at Risk of Deadly Disease

A COMPANY has been fined following an outbreak of legionella at its sheltered housing accommodation in Birkenhead, putting vulnerable residents at risk of contracting Legionnaires' disease.

The HSE investigation found the company poorly managed the risk of legionella in the water system, with staff inadequately trained and supervised. The residents were a particularly vulnerable group due to their age and underlying health issues, putting them at a higher risk of contracting Legionnaires' disease.

LEGAL BREACHES	FINE	COURT COSTS
Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974	£9,000,000	£11,480.60

Fatal Accident Lands Glass Procession Company in the Dock

Following an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI), a glass processing company, Glas-Seal (NI) Ltd, has been fined for failing to ensure the safety of its employees.

The investigation found that there was no risk assessment for the works undertaken or sufficient measures for in place for training of staff or safe storage of products.

LEGAL BREACHES	FINE	COURT COSTS
Section 4(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Order (NI) 1978	£30,000	N/A

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Briefing Date:		Briefers Signature:	
Sentinel Coordinator:		Sentinel Coordinator Signature:	

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By signing below, I confirm that I have received and understood the briefing material contained within this bulletin.

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