

£500,000 fine for firework firm after young father killed in blast

A Peterborough company has been fined £500,000 after a young father was killed in an explosion at a firework factory.

Twenty-four-year-old Brendan Ledgister was working for Le Maitre Ltd when one of the products he was using [ignited and caused an explosion](#) on 2 October 2018.



The aftermath of the explosion at Le Maitre Limited

Brendan, who lived in Peterborough, had only become a father eight months before and was described as “kind, gentle and funny”.

Brendan’s father Gladstone Ledgister said: “It was the worst day in my life. My only son and best friend died. The suffering is still embedded in my mind and will never leave me until I die.

“He was such a nice boy, he was kind, gentle, funny, and happy – and its all been taken away from us – especially from his daughter. She didn’t even know him.”

Peterborough Magistrates Court heard how Mr Ledgister was making a pyrotechnic composition when one of the products ignited causing a significant explosion. He suffered serious burns in the explosion and died of his injuries the following day.

An Investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) determined that the system of work for working with explosive materials was not safe. The tools he was provided with were unsuitable for handling the explosive materials and the facility in which he was working was not of an appropriate standard. The company also failed to provide him with adequate training and he was not appropriately supervised.



The aftermath of the explosion at Le Maitre Limited

Le Maitre Ltd (now known as LM140121 Limited) were found guilty of breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act as, on and prior to the 2 October 2018, they failed in their duties to ensure so far as reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of their employees, and hence were found guilty of under section 33(1)(a) of the Act. The company were fined £500,000 and ordered to pay costs of £ 20,788.65.

Speaking after the hearing the HM Inspector of Health and Safety, Stuart Charles said: "Our thoughts and sympathies remain with Brendan's family.

"While the explosive sector in the UK is relatively small and incidents relatively uncommon, when they do occur they often result in significant injury or death.

"This case should reinforce the message to the sector that appropriate precautions must be maintained or an event such as this is likely."

Notes to Editors:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Guidance on the [Explosives Regulations 2014: Safety Provisions](#) is available.