

# Chemical company fined after agency worker suffers chemical burns

- Flowchem UK Ltd fined £50,000 after worker suffered chemical burns from corrosive drain un-blocker
- HSE found inadequate training, PPE not routinely worn, and insufficient first aid provisions
- HSE guidance is available

A manufacturer of household cleaning products in Nottingham has been fined after an agency worker suffered burns to her face, eye, neck and arm when she was doused in a corrosive sink and drain un-blocker.

Marzanna Sokolowska was working for Flowchem UK Ltd at its manufacturing site in Nottingham on 2nd November 2023 when she was doused with a significant quantity of corrosive liquid after accidentally opening the wrong valve on a 1,000 litre container.

Ms Sokolowska was working in a team decanting sink and drain un-blocker liquid from bulk containers at shoulder height into smaller containers for sale.

Ms Sokolowska accidentally opened the outlet valve on an adjacent container to the one fitted with a decanting hose, which had no end cap fitted. The liquid sprayed out under considerable force splashing her in the face and upper body.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the system of work employed by Flowchem exposed their employees and agency workers to health and safety risks in the event of leaks or losses of containment.

Training arrangements, including the provision of adequate information to workers with limited understanding of English was inadequate. Whilst some personal protective equipment (PPE) was provided by the company, it was routinely not worn, and there was inadequate supervision or monitoring to ensure the use of PPE.

Whilst eye-wash bottles were provided, the first aid arrangements available did not take account of the potential scale of any exposure, including the lack of a shower for example.

HSE guidance on the [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations \(COSHH\)](#) states that employers should identify the risks arising from the use of substances hazardous to health and put in place effective measures to prevent exposure and mitigate the consequences of any such exposure. These measures should include consideration of the systems of work under which the dangerous substances are handled, the training and supervision of those

engaged in the work and the provision of adequate PPE and first aid arrangements.

Flowchem UK Ltd of Mark Street, Sandiacre, Nottingham NG10 5AD pleaded guilty to breaches of Section 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £7,247.40 in costs with a victim surcharge of £2000 at Nottingham Magistrates Court on 12 February 2026.

**HSE Inspector, Angus Robbins, said:** “The systems of work employed by Flowchem unnecessarily exposed workers to risks of injury from exposure to corrosive chemicals. More suitable working methods, including avoidance of decanting large volumes stored at or above head height could have been employed. Following the incident, Flowchem changed their working methods to eliminate these risks.

“Ms Sokolowska suffered very painful injuries and was unable to work for a considerable period. Of particular concern were the burns to her eyelid and eye. Fortunately, she has made a reasonable recovery and been able to return to work.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Andrew Siddall and paralegal officer, Farhat Basir.

#### **Further Information**

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
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. Relevant guidance can be found here [COSHH basics: overview – COSHH](#)
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).

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## **Two firms fined after racking collapse killed two workers**

- Two men killed following an incident at an industrial estate near Bradford.

- Lee Horton, 58 from Ilkley and Daron Pickstock, 43 from Chorley died.
- HSE investigation found serious failures in risk assessment and safe systems of work.

Two companies have been fined following an incident which resulted in the deaths of two workers in West Yorkshire.

Lee Horton, 58, and Daron Pickstock, 43, were killed when an industrial racking system collapsed as it was being tested at Castefields Industrial Estate in Bingley on 29 October 2020.

The racking was being tested at a site belonging to Space Productiv Ltd, of which Mr Horton, from Ilkley, was the managing director. Mr Pickstock, who was from Chorley, was self-employed and working for a company called Collins Site Services.

The racking system was being loaded with test weights, some of which weighed up to two tonnes, when the structure began to collapse. The two men had been working from a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) next to the racking structure as it was being loaded.

However, as the structure collapsed, it struck the MEWP, causing it to overturn while both men were inside. Mr Horton and Mr Pickstock sustained fatal injuries and died shortly afterwards.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that both companies failed to adequately assess the risks arising from the work being undertaken and failed to put in place a safe system of work to ensure the health and safety of those involved.

HSE found that the planned and implemented systems of work were unsafe. Workers were positioned within the collapse zone of the racking during testing, placing them at serious risk should the structure fail.

Space Productiv Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined **£97,500** and ordered to pay **£17,377** in costs at Leeds Crown Court on 11 February 2026.

Collins Site Services Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined **£60,000** and ordered to pay **£10,292** in costs at Leeds Crown Court on 11 February 2026.

### **Family tributes**



Lee Horton

Emma Horton, daughter of Lee Horton, said:

“Lee was more than just a father to Josh and I; he was our best friend, therapist, career advisor and confidant. We feel incredibly fortunate to have had such a special and unique bond with him, but that only makes the void he’s left behind feel all the more immense.

"There are no words that can fully capture the magnitude of our loss.

"His humour, warmth and generosity are deeply missed by all who knew him."



Daron Pickstock

Jack Stileman, son of Daron Pickstock, said:

"My dad was a hard worker and content in his life. He didn't like unnecessary drama or unkindness, and he was grateful for what he had.

"My future children do not get the chance to have a grandfather. I feel heartbroken for them that the circumstances surrounding my dad's death happened at work and could very possibly have been avoided.

"My dad liked the best quality of things. He taught me how to fix things and adapt things to make them work. He was constantly mending something, and I miss that guidance on what I could do better when we spent time together.

"We shared a love of music and the benefits it can have in your life. We talked openly about life and now that's gone. No one can replace my dad."

**HSE Inspector Mark Slater said:**

"All work activities where there is a risk to health and safety should be properly planned and risk assessed, and safe systems of work must be followed.

"Where risks cannot be eliminated, it is vital that workers are kept out of danger zones to reduce the risk of serious injury or death.

"In this case, inadequate planning and unsafe systems of work exposed workers to an unacceptable level of risk. This was a wholly avoidable incident."

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Daniel Poole and paralegal officer Sarah Zara Salman.

## **Notes to editors**

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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. Relevant guidance can be found here [Managing for health and safety](#)
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can

be found [here](#).

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## Machine manufacturer fined £10,000 after lathe incident leaves employee with finger amputated

- Employee lost finger when glove caught in metalworking lathe while using emery cloth
- Company failed to assess risks and ensure safe system of work
- HSE guidance states emery cloth should never be applied directly by hand

A machine manufacturing company in Middleton has been fined after an employee lost their finger and required amputation when it became caught in emery cloth used on a metal-working lathe.

On 26 April 2024, an employee was using emery cloth to polish metal work pieces when his glove was drawn into the lathe he was operating.

Following the incident, the employee had a finger on his right hand amputated. He was unable to return to his profession as a turner and was made redundant from Carter Brothers in January 2025.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Carter Brothers failed to adequately assess the risk to employees undertaking polishing of work pieces using emery cloths and failed to ensure a safe system of work.

HSE provides guidance [using emery cloth on metalworking lathes](#). Guidance states that emery cloth should never be applied directly by hand to work rotating in a lathe. Acceptable methods include using the tool post as a clamp or a dedicated holding device, both of which reduce the risk of injury.

Carter Brothers International Limited, of Unit 30 Finlan Road, Stakehill Industrial Estate, Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £3,758.55 in costs with a victim surcharge of £2000 at Manchester Magistrates' Court on 9 February 2026.

### **HSE Inspector Leanne Ratcliffe said:**

“This incident not only left the employee with a life-altering injury, but also meant they could not continue working in their chosen profession.

“The risks associated with using emery cloth on metalworking lathes are

widely known. The company should have introduced measures to carry out polishing safely and today's fine reflects their failure to properly follow health and safety guidance

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski and paralegal officer Benjamin Stobbart.

### Further Information

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2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) are available.
4. Relevant guidance can be found here [Using emery cloth on metalworking lathes](#) and [EIS2: The use of emery cloth on metalworking lathes](#)
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).

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## Man jailed after dangerous and illegal gas work put pensioner at risk

- Israel Jackson jailed for 12 months for carrying out fraudulent & dangerous gas work.
- Relatives raised concerns after smelling gas following new boiler fitting.
- Jackson was previously prosecuted by HSE in 2015 – and has never been on the Gas Safe register.

A man who fraudulently claimed to be Gas Safe Registered (GSR) has been jailed after his dangerous work put the life of a 90-year-old homeowner at risk.

Israel Jackson, 56, of Sandbach Place, London, was sent by a contracted company to install a new boiler at the elderly man's home in Croydon in May 2022 after he lied about being qualified to carry out the work. The sole trader has now been jailed for 12 months.

Carrying out gas work without registration is illegal and potentially dangerous, as unqualified work can lead to gas leaks, fires, explosions, and

carbon monoxide poisoning.

It is not the first time Jackson has been prosecuted for illegal gas work after the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) did so in 2015.

Although he has never been registered, Jackson installed a new boiler at the man's home and even issued a fraudulent gas safety certificate with a GSR licence number. The pensioner's relatives raised concerns when they noticed the hot water wasn't working and there was a smell of gas.

Jackson returned to carry out repairs on more than one occasion – even after a British Gas engineer had issued an 'immediately dangerous notice'. This included on the day after that action was taken, with Jackson even demanding his taxi fare be paid to come back to the house. While there, he completely ignored the dangerous notice and put the boiler back into use.

It was only in June the following year that another engineer – this time from BT Heating and Property – issued another immediately dangerous notice, before completely replacing the boiler.

GSR inspectors attended the property and found that Jackson was not registered when he installed the boiler in May 2022 and provided the fraudulent certificate. The matter was investigated by HSE, whose inspectors found that he had continued to carry out gas fitting work since his previous conviction and had never registered with GSR.

Jackson had been sent to install the boiler by a company called U-Works Services Ltd. He had told them he was qualified to carry out gas work but the company made no attempt to verify he was GSR registered before sending him out to carry out the work on their behalf. The company was served with an immediate prohibition notice by HSE.

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 require those undertaking gas work to be Gas Safe registered and to hold the relevant qualifications to demonstrate their competence.

Members of the public are reminded that all gas work must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Anyone can check whether an engineer is registered by visiting [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk) or calling 0800 408 5500.

Jackson pleaded guilty to contravening Regulation 3(3) and 3(7) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was jailed for 12 months at Croydon Crown Court on 4 February 2026.

**HSE Inspector Lucy Ellison-Dunn said:** "Israel Jackson did not think that the law applied to him.

"Despite a previous conviction for the same offence, he continued to carry out gas work and in this case, putting the life of a vulnerable man at risk.

"He fraudulently told people he was a registered gas engineer, despite not having the competence to install the boiler and pipework correctly.

"Customers rightly expect that employers will carry out the proper checks on those they contract to complete work. It is quick and easy to do this with the Gas Safe Register.

"I would ask all members of the public to verify an engineer's registration online."

The investigation was carried out by HM Inspectors Gordon Carson and Lucy Ellison-Dunn and the prosecution brought by HSE lawyer Rebecca Schwartz and paralegal Melissa Wardle.

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3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Guidance on [domestic gas health and safety](#) is available.
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences in England and Wales can be found [here](#) and for those in Scotland [here](#).

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## **Manufacturer fined after employee's fingers severed**

- South Kirby firm fined £24,395 after employee suffered partial severing of two fingers
- Worker was cleaning printing machine when fingers were drawn into unguarded rollers
- HSE investigation found company failed to prevent access to dangerous machinery parts

A wooden cable drum manufacturer based in South Kirkby has been fined £24,395 after an employee's fingers were severed in a printing machine.

A 57-year-old woman was working for Askern UK Limited at its site in South Kirkby, Pontefract on 8 March 2024 when she was able to raise the guard and easily override an interlock to run the rollers of a machine which prints logos. The employee was cleaning the rollers with a paper towel when her fingers were drawn into the nip point, leaving two of her fingers partially



severed.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Askern UK Limited failed to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery, namely the moving rollers of the printing machine. The investigation also found that the company had failed to adequately maintain the machine or provide employees with suitable training for the printer.



Image from site

HSE guidance states employers must take effective measures to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery. This includes ensuring protection devices, such as interlocks, are not easily bypassed or disabled. Further guidance on the [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\)](#) is available.

Askern UK Limited, of 28 Lidgate Crescent, Lanthwaite Business Park, South Kirkby, Pontefract, WF9 3NR, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £24,395, ordered to pay £5000 in costs and a victim surcharge of £2,000 in costs at Leeds Magistrates' Court on 4 February 2026.

**HSE inspector Shauna Halstead said:** "This case demonstrated multiple failures by the company in respect of the printing machine.

"An employee was tasked with cleaning the printer without provision of suitable information, instruction or training, particularly in relation to the safety devices intended to protect them.

"A suitable interlock and employee training would have prevented this incident"

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Samantha Crockett, paralegal officer Benjamin Stobbart, and HSE legal team.

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4. Relevant guidance can be found here [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) – HSE](#)
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).