

# Heat warning: Employers must prepare for a warmer future

Employers need to act now to make sure their workplaces are ready for warmer weather in the future.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is advising businesses to think how they need to adapt to warmer working conditions for their staff.

After last month's record-breaking temperatures and with more hot weather expected this week, HSE is asking employers to ensure extreme heat becomes part of their long-term planning.

With temperatures reaching an unprecedented 40°C in some parts of England in July, adapting to climate change is something all businesses will need to consider as warmer weather becomes more frequent.

Employers have a legal obligation under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to assess risks to the health and safety of workers. They must review the risk controls they have in place and update them if needed. This includes risks from more frequent extreme weather such as heatwaves.

While there is [no maximum temperature for workplaces](#), all workers are entitled to an environment where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled. Heat is classed as a hazard and comes with legal obligations like any other hazard.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, which require employers to provide a reasonable temperature in the workplace.

John Rowe, HSE's Acting Head of Operational Strategy, said: "We expect employers to take this recent weather event as the prompt to review how they assess the risk of high temperatures in their workplace and identify now those changes that will future proof them.

"All workplaces need to acknowledge that the working environment is changing. There are low-cost adaptations to the structure of work, but things like improved ventilation and air conditioning should also be considered which will involve investment in the workplace.

"Extreme heat that we have witnessed of late isn't going to stop and we want employers to plan and respond to this now."

You can find more guidance on taking practical steps to work safely in hot conditions:

[Temperature at work](#)

[Temperature: employees' guide](#)

[Temperature: What the law says](#)

[Temperature: Outdoor working](#)

[Workplace health, safety and welfare](#)

[Basics for your business](#)

#### **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. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. HSE is happy to facilitate any media interview requests

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## **[Employee crushed by bus suffers life-changing injuries](#)**

A bus company has been fined £380,000 after one of its employees was crushed between a reversing bus and a stationary vehicle.

The employee of Stagecoach Devon Limited was working at the company's Torquay depot on the morning of 3 October 2019.

Due to space limitations, buses often had to reverse to be able to leave the depot in readiness for the day's work.

The sole banksman, who would direct vehicles, was occupied at the top of the depot where most buses were parked.

As a result, it became custom and practice for the bus drivers at the front of the depot to reverse without a banksman, or to assist each other when reversing, despite not being trained as banksmen.

The injured employee, who was caught between a reversing bus and a stationary vehicle, suffered compound multiple fractures of his arm requiring six titanium plates and 65 metal staples between his wrist and elbow.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Stagecoach Devon Limited failed to put a suitable and sufficient risk assessment in place.

This should have identified the risks inherent in the bus parking layout and

action could have been taken to remove the need to reverse or mitigate the risks from reversing. For example, changing the parking layout, providing a sufficient number of trained banksmen for peak times, and improved segregation of vehicles and pedestrians.

At Plymouth Magistrates Court Stagecoach Devon Limited of One Stockport Exchange, 20 Railway Road, Stockport, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £380,000 and ordered to pay costs of £18,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector James Collins said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of work.

"If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, the life changing injuries sustained by the employee could have been prevented."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)
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## **[Company fined after worker falls from a fork-lift truck while cleaning windows](#)**

A carpentry and joinery company has been fined after a man working unsecured on the forks of a fork-lift truck fell 3.5 metres to the ground.

On 14 June 2021, the man was working for Staircraft Group Limited at their head office site at Bayton Road Industrial Estate, Exhall, Coventry.

The employee was working from an unsecured stillage on the forks of a fork-lift truck in order to clean office windows at height. The stillage tipped and the employee fell 3.5 metres to the ground. As a result of the incident, he sustained a broken leg and an injury to his elbow.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company failed to identify that using a stillage to lift someone on the forks of a forklift truck, a method that they had used before, was unsafe. There was a lack of training for employees on the dangers of working at height without the proper equipment and there were no systems of work or risk assessments in place.

At Redditch Magistrates' Court Staircraft Group Limited, of Bayton Road Industrial Estate, Exhall, Coventry pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1974 and was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,477.93.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Rebecca Whiley said: "The employee's injuries were very serious, and he could have easily been killed.

"This serious incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)
3. Guidance for companies on the safe working at height practices is available at: [www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm)
4. HSE news releases are available at: <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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## **[The Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity joins HSE's Working Minds campaign](#)**

HSE's Working Minds campaign has added to its partner roster with the addition of the Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity.

Construction is one of the key focus sectors for the campaign and the

Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity provides a new route for Working Minds to raise awareness of how to prevent work-related stress and encourage good mental health. Survey results published by [Construction News](#) show that the pressure to work to tight deadlines is the number one reason why workers say they are struggling at work.

The anonymous survey captured a picture of the mental health of UK construction workers and what has changed in recent years. More than half of workers taking part in the survey said that they did not receive the appropriate level of support with their mental health from their managers. And 59 per cent did not tell their employer that the reason they needed time off was for mental health, a slight improvement compared to 2019.

Bill Hill, CEO of the Lighthouse Club said, “No construction worker or their family should be alone in a crisis and we have a number of ways that people can reach out for support. We provide 24/7 free and confidential emotional, physical and financial support to our construction community in the UK and Ireland.

“A crucial element of the charity’s strategy is to provide a range of free and easily accessible pro-active resources to support the construction community at an individual and employer level.

“Over 87% of the workforce are male and over 50% of the sector is made up of self employed, agency staff or on zero-hour contract workers. Many of these have no access to support so it’s vital that we reach our ‘boots on the ground’ workforce to let them know about the support they can access.”

Sarah Jardine, Head of Construction Division HSE, said: “The Working Minds campaign is calling for a culture change across Britain’s workplaces where managing stress and talking about how people are coping is as routine as managing workplace safety.

“By increasing our campaign partners we are able to increase the reach and visibility of our campaign, allowing us all to achieve greater success. The Lighthouse Club, alongside existing partner [Mates in Mind](#), will help us to talk to businesses and workers in the construction industry. They will play an important role in sharing key information as well as provide essential insight into the unique stressors experienced by people working in the industry as we continue to evolve our campaign.”

Working Minds is aimed specifically at supporting small businesses by providing employers and workers with easy to implement advice, including simple steps based on risk assessment to Reach out, Recognise, Respond, Reflect, and make it Routine.

### **More about the Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity.**

The charity provides [free support services](#) to any construction worker or their family including;

- **24/7 Construction Industry Helpline, call 0345 605 1956**
- **Text HARDHAT to 85258** if you’re uncomfortable talking and would rather

text

- **Free Construction Industry Helpline mobile app**
- **Wellbeing Masterclass Sessions and MHFA training**
- **Lighthouse Beacons** volunteer centres around the UK where workers can drop in to socialise and meet others that are struggling with life problems.
- **Help Inside The Hard Hat** is an awareness campaign signposting to all the freeresources available for companies to help develop and execute wellbeing strategies.

The charity receives no public funding and relies entirely on the support of the construction community to raise funds to support the construction workforce and their families.

[The Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity](#)

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#### **□About the Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity**

□The Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity is the only charity that is 100% dedicated to providing emotional, physical and financial wellbeing support to the construction community and their families.

The charity provides a 24/7 Construction Industry Helpline which provides a range of free and confidential wellbeing support services and this is complemented by their free Construction Industry Helpline App and text HARDHAT service. □

The charity also offers a huge variety of free construction focussed training programmes ranging from hour long interactive wellbeing sessions through to the MHFA England approved Mental Health First Aider courses.

[www.lighthouseclub.org](http://www.lighthouseclub.org)

[www.constructionindustryhelpline.com](http://www.constructionindustryhelpline.com)

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# Construction company fined £600K after death of seven-year-old



A civil engineering firm has been fined £600K for safety breaches after a seven-year-old child became trapped and suffocated on a construction site.

Seven-year-old Conley Thompson went missing from home on the morning of 26 July 2015 and was found the next morning by workers at the construction site at Bank End Road, Worsborough, in South Yorkshire.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Conley had become trapped in a drainage pipe, which had been fixed into the ground in preparation for the installation of fencing posts. Tragically, he had suffocated before being found the next morning when work restarted on site.

Howard Civil Engineering Ltd of Howard House Limewood Approach Leeds pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 13(4)(b) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £600K and ordered to pay £42,952.88 in costs at Sheffield Crown Court today.

The construction site was a new-build housing development next to an existing housing estate and adjacent to busy pedestrian footpaths and roads. HSE found that there was insufficient fencing in place to prevent unauthorised persons from accessing the construction site due to a combination of poor planning, management and monitoring of the site and its perimeter.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Paul Yeadon said: "Conley should never have been able to be on that site. He should have been kept out.

"The construction industry should be aware of the dangers of construction

sites to members of the public and any other unauthorised persons.

“The dangers to children gaining access to construction sites and treating them like a playground is an ongoing problem which must be addressed at all types of sites no matter what their complexity or size.

“The industry must do all it can to ensure children can’t access construction sites and be exposed to the inherent risks they present to prevent further tragedies like this from occurring.”

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3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk><sup>[3]</sup>
4. Please see the link to the page on HSE’s website that is the best guide to doing it the right way:  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/publicprotection.htm>