

Two contractors sentenced after cable strike at substation

A principal contractor and subcontractor have been fined after an employee's retina was damaged by an explosion caused by a cable strike during construction works at a substation.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how VolkerInfra Ltd, a high voltage cabling contractor, had been subcontracted by principal contractor Siemens Energy Ltd to carry out cabling works as part of a wider construction project at Whitegate Substation in Chadderton, Manchester.

On the 17th September 2019, an employee of VolkerInfra Ltd, who was excavating phases for laying a 275kV cable, struck an existing live cable close by with the excavator. The contact resulted in multiple explosions which caused blistering to the driver's retina.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the permit to dig had not been properly completed by Siemens Energy. It was also found neither they, nor the subcontractors had checked the cable markings prior to work commencing. The existing live cable had not been adequately identified and so the markings for the cable location were incorrect by around 50cm. It was also found there had been inadequate monitoring and supervision of work.

Siemens Energy Ltd of Faraday House, Sir William Siemens Square, Camberley, Surrey pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 and Section 3 (1) Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 was fined £900,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,327.52.

Volkerinfra Ltd of Hertford House, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire pleaded guilty to breaches of Section 3 (1) Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £180,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,430.72.

HSE Inspector Rebecca Vaudrey said after the hearing: "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 working."

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. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at:

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Hospitality venues urged to arrange checks for outdoor installations ahead of busy period

Pubs, restaurants and other hospitality venues are being urged to make sure electrical installations and electrical equipment for use in outdoor spaces are safe as they enter the spring and summer season.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is working with both representatives from the hospitality industry and local authority enforcement officers to increase awareness and to improve safety standards.

HSE is stressing that venues should arrange for a competent person to carry out electrical installation work, only using lights and heaters specifically designed for outdoor use, and regularly checking equipment for damage or water ingress. The fixed installation and electrical appliances should be inspected, tested and maintained in accordance with the [Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#).

John Rowe, HSE's Head of Operational Strategy said: "The hospitality sector will be looking forward to an exciting and busy period, as it prepares for the spring and summer seasons, which will include major events such as the Commonwealth Games and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Those responsible for outdoor spaces will be planning to make use of them. It is important to make sure electrical equipment is in good condition, particularly as it may have been unused and in storage for a long period of time."

The information below is for the installation and use of plug-in electrical equipment. Anyone selecting, using or maintaining such equipment should be competent to do so.

Before installing any outdoor equipment:

- Consider using extra low voltage or solar equipment to provide a safer installation
- Only select equipment that is suitable for outdoor use
- Check that equipment is not damaged particularly if it has been stored

from previous use.

- Ensure that the existing electrical installation is in good condition and compatible with the equipment to be installed. This will include being able to accommodate the electrical load so that circuits and sockets are not overloaded
- Ensure that equipment is only connected to a socket protected by a suitable RCD.
- Ensure that sockets are in good condition, suitable for use outside if appropriate and in a location where they won't be accessed or damaged by customers.
- Remove equipment from its packaging before installation
- Switch off the electrical supply before connecting

During installation and when using the equipment:

- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions and retain for future reference
- Ensure that equipment is installed in locations where it will not be damaged and away from flammable materials and decorations.
- Check frequently for any damage to equipment and replace failed lamps as appropriate.
- Always switch off before replacing lamps and use the correct replacement lamp
- Keep equipment packaging for any future storage. If equipment is stored ensure that it is not in damp or excessively hot conditions

Any permanent fixed installation of equipment that does not require sockets, and the installation of sockets should be undertaken and thereafter maintained by a competent electrician.

Further information on [electrical safety](#) can be obtained on the HSE website.

About HSE

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[HSE inspections target woodworking](#)

businesses to tackle occupational lung disease



Ventilation, protective equipment and appropriate guarding are some of the measures businesses should consider as Britain's workplace regulator is carrying out inspections to protect the respiratory health of workers.

From April, health and safety inspectors across Great Britain will be visiting business within woodworking industries such as sawmilling, manufacture of composite boards, and carpentry, as well as other industries where wood dust exposure can occur.

Woodworking industries have the potential for high incidence rates of occupational asthma and work-aggravated asthma caused by worker exposure to inadequately controlled wood dust in the workplace.

Inspectors will be looking for evidence that employers have considered the control measures required to reduce workers exposure to wood dust, that workers understand the risks of exposure to wood dust, and effective control measures have been put in place to protect workers from harm. Inspectors will take enforcement action when necessary to make sure workers are protected.

HSE's head of manufacturing David Butter said: "Around 12,000 workers died last year from lung diseases linked to past exposure from work, with thousands more cases of ill-health and working days lost. Wood dust can cause serious health problems. It can cause [asthma](#), which carpenters and joiners are four times more likely to get compared with other UK workers, as well as nasal cancer. Our campaign aims to help businesses whose workers cut and

shape wood to take action now to protect their workers' respiratory health.

"Through visiting wood working businesses, our inspectors are able to speak to a range of dutyholders and look at the measures they have in place to comply with the guidance and protect workers from respiratory diseases such as occupational asthma and nasal cancer.

"Businesses can act now to ensure they are complying with the law by ensuring the control of wood dust at source by fitting and using extraction on machines. Ensuring they fit and use guards on machines to protect fingers and hands and ensure those that use the machine to understand the risks and how to control them. Checking that guards are well adjusted will minimise danger and ensure that dust capture remains effective.

"Our inspection initiative aims to ensure employers and workers are aware of the risks associated with the activities they do. They must recognise these dangers and manage these risks through reducing exposure. Dutyholders need to do the right thing, for example, through completing a risk assessment, ensuring workers are trained, appropriate guarding is fitted and adjusted correctly, and reducing exposure using local exhaust ventilation (LEV) and using suitable respiratory protective equipment (RPE) to protect workers, where required."

For the latest advice and guidance visit www.hse.gov.uk/woodworking/; for more information on the programme of inspections follow the campaign on Twitter at @H_S_E or on Facebook @hsegovuk. You can also join the conversation at #WorkRight and sign up for HSE's e-bulletin [here](#).

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2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. The inspection programme will be supported by HSE's 'Work-Right' campaign, aimed to influence employer behaviour by encouraging woodworking industries.

[Company fined after worker died following fall from shipping container](#)

A transport and haulage company was sentenced after a worker died after

falling from the rear of a transport shipping container.

Newcastle Magistrates' Court heard that on 27 June 2018, J R Adams (Newcastle) Limited employee Keith Robson was involved in the task of unloading goods from the transport shipping container, which was on the back of a large goods road vehicle trailer at the company premises in Gateshead. The employee was inside the open topped container with the rear doors open preparing access for the overhead crane, and then the removal of the shipment of steel girders. While undertaking this work the employee fell approximately 1.5 metres from the rear of the container.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that although the company had various generic risk assessments and safe working method statements, it had not put in place the simple control measures to prevent or mitigate a fall from the rear of this container. It also failed to carry out a suitable or sufficient risk assessment for this specific work activity.

J R Adams (Newcastle) Limited of Gateshead Longrigg, Swallwell, Gateshead pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay costs of £15,322.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Paul Wilson said: "A worker died from injuries sustained in this incident. His death could have very easily been avoided had the company recognised the risk of a fall from the container when unloading the steel and put in place simple and easily available controls."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. For more information about machinery safety visit: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/machinery/safety.htm>

Farmer fined after worker becomes entangled in potato harvester

A farmer has been sentenced after a worker suffered multiple injuries after becoming entangled in the contra-rotating rollers of a potato harvester.

Folkestone Magistrates' Court heard that on 21 August 2020, the worker was involved in unblocking the potato harvester at a farm in Kent when he stepped down on to the rollers. The worker was pulled leg first into the machine and became stuck up to his knee. This resulted in burns to the leg, a pulled hamstring, torn calf, broken nerves and hairline fractures to the knee and ankle.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the farmer had failed to implement a 'safe stop procedure' to isolate power and stop the movement of the rollers before the worker accessed them.

Alan Down of Main Road, Sellindge, Ashford, Kent pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1)(b) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. He was fined £4,992 and ordered to pay costs of £5,805.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Sam Brown said: "Too often we see incidents like this, where maintenance is carried out on live machinery and the principles of 'safe stop' and safe maintenance are ignored.

"The agricultural industry accounts for around one per cent of the workforce in Great Britain, yet it accounts for 20 per cent of worker deaths. Many of these deaths are due to poor working practices while carrying out maintenance on machinery. In addition, many more workers are seriously injured each year due to unsafe working practices while working on machinery.

"Those undertaking maintenance work on agricultural machinery should ensure that the principles of 'safe stop' are followed to prevent people being put at risk of injury."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1998/2306/contents/made

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

4. For more information on safe practices, specifically in relation to agricultural machinery visit: www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/machinery/safe-use-1.htm and

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg241.pdf