

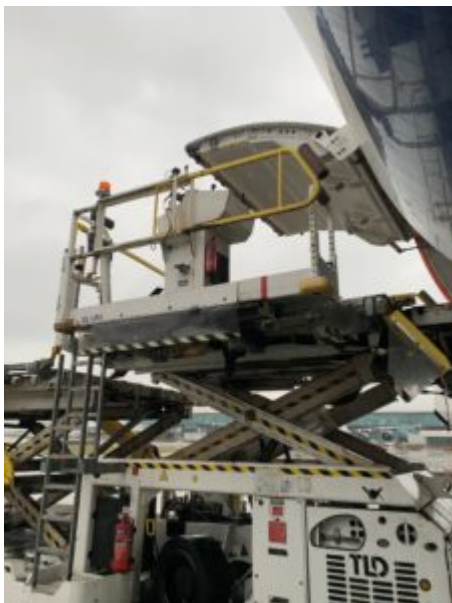
British Airways fined more than £3million following worker injuries at Heathrow

- Both workers “fortunate to be alive”, says HSE lawyer
- HSE guidance available on working from height and safe handling of baggage
- Specific guidance on airside safety management available from Civil Aviation Authority

British Airways has been fined more than £3million after two employees fell from height and sustained serious injuries.

The airline was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) following two separate incidents at Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport.

On 25 August 2022, a 54 -year-old employee had been unloading baggage containers from an aircraft when he slipped off a televator and landed 1.5 metres onto the ground below. He suffered serious back and head injuries, including a fractured vertebrae, as a result.



The HSE investigation found there were gaps between the televator's guardrails and the aircraft fuselage, the size of which depended on the type of aircraft, creating the fall from height hazard. The gaps increased in size after the front of the televators' platforms at Terminal 5 were extended – but additional measures to prevent falls from height had not been implemented.

At the time of the incident, British Airways had started a programme to retrofit extendable guardrails to televators in response to previous HSE visits. This was completed following the incident.

In the second incident a British Airways worker sustained head injuries, including a fractured jaw and bleeding on the brain, on 8 March 2023, while unloading baggage containers from an aircraft following its arrival from Seattle. The 43-year-old fell from an elevator and landed three metres onto the ground below.

Both employees were taken to hospital for treatment and had to take several months off work.

The HSE investigation into this incident identified a risk of employees falling from height from the front of the elevator platforms when they were being used during loading and unloading of some aircraft types. Flaps on either side of the platform would be left folded down leaving a gap between the platform and aircraft fuselage.

It also found that the elevator's operator platform had not been fully extended towards the aircraft, creating a gap which employees could fall through.

Falls from height remain one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death. HSE has detailed [guidance](#) on working safely at height while the Civil Aviation Authority has guidance with input from HSE on ground handling activities, including aircraft loading, on its [website](#).

British Airways PLC, of Waterside, Speedbird Way, Harmondsworth, Greater London, pleaded guilty to two charges under Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

The company was fined £1.33million in relation to the August 2022 incident, and £1.875million in relation to the March 2023 incident. The company was also ordered to pay £20,935 in costs at Southwark Crown Court on 15 May 2025.

HSE enforcement lawyer Rebecca Schwartz, who brought the prosecution, said:

"Falls from height present a real risk of death or serious, life-changing injury. Both employees are fortunate to be alive today.

"The risks of working at height and the necessary control measures are well established – in these cases adequate guardrails would have significantly reduced the risk of harm. This was a reasonably foreseeable risk that British Airways should have been aware of and therefore it should have done more to protect its employees."

Moving baggage between an aircraft and the luggage carousel in the terminal building is dynamic and time-pressured. It therefore comes with a range of risks to baggage handlers. Several HSE inspections have taken place at Heathrow Airport, identifying risks with manual handling and maintenance of equipment as well as falls from height. Airlines and ground handling companies have needed to take action as a result of these visits. HSE guidance is available [here](#).

This HSE prosecution was supported by HSE paralegal officer Melissa Wardle.

Notes to editors:

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. 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](#).

Farm fined after worker's leg trapped in machine

· "Safe stop" procedure must be followed when using potato harvesters, says regulator

A farming partnership has been fined £20,000 after an employee trapped his leg in a potato harvester machine whilst working on a farm in Cheshire.

The employee, who was 20-years-old at the time, was working for LP Ollier & Son on its potato farm when the incident occurred on 18 October 2023. Whilst assessing a blockage in the potato harvester machine, the roller mechanism caught his right leg and pulled it into the device, causing serious injuries including crushing, fractures, nerve damage and skin damage. He has been unable to work in agriculture since the incident.



An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the guard gates to the machine were open and the machine was not isolated. LP Ollier & Son failed to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery, namely the rotating parts of a potato harvester by means of implementing and following a suitable safe system of work.

HSE guidance states that employers must follow the 'safe stop' procedure when using a potato harvester, including when dealing with blockages. This is in order to ensure that dangerous parts are not accessed when the machine is powered. Suitable training must be given, and monitoring and supervision must be in place to ensure that the 'safe stop' procedure is adhered to at all times. Guidance can be found here: [Safe use of potato harvesters – HSE](#).

LP Ollier & Son, of Frog Lane Farm, Frog Lane, Knutsford, Cheshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The partnership was fined £20,000 with a £2000 victim surcharge and ordered to pay £5,110.80 in costs at Warrington Magistrates Court.

HSE inspector Joseph Wright said: "All too often, serious and sometimes fatal incidents occur as a result of inadequate systems of work in relation to

potato harvesters. This case was a wholly avoidable incident caused by the failure to follow the safe stop procedure for the potato harvester, and ensure that the machine was fully isolated before a blockage was addressed. Had the partnership ensured a suitable safe system of work was followed when blockages occurred, these life-changing injuries would not have occurred.

“The fine imposed on LP Ollier & Son should underline to everyone in the potato harvesting trade and wider agricultural industry, that the courts, and HSE, take a failure to abide by the law very seriously. We will not hesitate to take action when there is a failure to keep employees and contractors safe while they are working.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Julian White and paralegal officer Imogen Isaac.

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[HSE provides free online learning to help employers tackle work-related stress](#)

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has today (12 May) launched a free online learning module to help employers get to grips with risk assessment of work-related stress.

The launch coincides with Mental Health Awareness Week (12-18 May) and expands HSE’s Working Minds campaign, which supports businesses in preventing work-related stress and supporting good mental health.

With around half of all work-related ill health attributed to stress, depression and anxiety, the new module provides step-by-step guidance for

employers on conducting effective risk assessments, identifying root causes of work-related stress, and implementing solutions that have a real impact.



The launch coincides with Mental Health Awareness Week (12-18 May)

Kayleigh Roberts from HSE's Engagement and Policy Division said: "Preventing work-related stress isn't just the right thing to do for your workers—it's also a legal requirement. Our new online learning module aims to make it easier for businesses, particularly small to medium organisations to understand their obligations and what they need to do on a practical level.

"This isn't about ticking boxes. It's about embedding good practices into everyday business operations. By taking a proactive approach, employers can improve productivity, reduce sickness absence, and retain their valued workers. The module provides all the practical templates, tools and resources needed to get started or to review existing practices."

HSE highlights six main areas that can lead to work-related stress if not managed properly: demands, control, support, relationships, role, and change.

Businesses are encouraged to implement the Working Minds campaign 5Rs approach to support the risk assessment process:

1. Reach out and have conversations
2. Recognise the signs and causes of stress
3. Respond to risks by agreeing action points
4. Reflect on the actions taken
5. Make it Routine to check in regularly

Employers can register for the [online learning module](#) to access step-by-step advice, practical tools, and downloadable templates.

Visit the [Working Minds campaign website](#) for more information about the Working Minds campaign and to download materials.

Further information:

- [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. Key stats can be found at www.hse.gov.uk.

- Mental Health Awareness Week runs from 12-18 May 2025.
 - The Working Minds campaign was launched to help businesses recognise the signs of work-related stress and make tackling issues routine.
 - More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
 - Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
 - 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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Car dealership fined after employees exposed to risks from vibrating tools

- Two employees diagnosed with Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) following repeated exposure.
- One worker says he had symptoms of HAVS for around eight years.
- Guidance to keep staff safe is available.

A car dealership franchise in Devon and Cornwall has been fined more than £200,000 after two of its workers were diagnosed with Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS).

The pair were diagnosed with the condition in November 2022 following repeated exposure to vibration from working for Rowes Garage Ltd at its bodyshop in Truro. They regularly used hand tools like random-orbital sanders and reciprocating saws for car body repairs.

Prolonged and regular exposure to vibration can affect a worker's health resulting in painful and disabling disorders of the nerves, blood supply, joints and muscles of the hands and arms. These disorders are collectively known as HAVS and the risk of onset or worsening of it increases with daily exposure and varies widely between individuals. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance can be found [here](#).

One of the affected employees, who did not wish to be named, said: "It's hard to say exactly how long I have had the symptoms for, but I think maybe about eight years.

"My fingers would go white and I'd lose feeling. This was particularly bad in damp or cold weather.

"I can say that over the years my symptoms seem to have got worse. The

blanching has spread and I find it hard to pick up small items.”

The HSE investigation found that Rows Garage had not put in place adequate management arrangements to assess and monitor the exposure of its employees to vibration. There was no suitable and sufficient risk assessment and control measures had not been implemented despite the likelihood of the exposure action value being exceeded.

Employees were not informed of the risk via information, instruction or training. Additionally, despite both employees reporting symptoms of ill health for a number of years, the company failed to take sufficient action to reduce their exposures.

Rows Garage Ltd of Vertu House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear (since November 2023), pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £204,000 and ordered to pay £8,099 in costs at Plymouth Magistrates’ Court on 8 May 2025.

HSE inspector Emma O’Hara said “Rows Garage Ltd had been exposing employees to the risks arising from the use of vibrating tools for a significant period of time.

“They fell below expected standards which has been reflected in the fine that has been imposed. HAVS is a serious and disabling permanent condition and HSE will not hesitate to take action against employers that fall below the expected standard.”

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Jonathan Bambro, and Paralegal Rebecca Forman.

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](#) is available.
4. Relevant HSE guidance can be found
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](#).
6. HAVS is an occupational disease reportable under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

Construction boss avoids jail after worker died during house extension

- Stephen Pywell fell while walking on roof beams
- HSE guidance on working at height is available

The director of a Leicester-based construction company has been given a suspended prison sentence after a man fell to his death while working on a house extension.

Stephen Pywell was working under the control of Affordable Lifestyle Design Limited at a site in Thurmaston on 18 March 2019. It was during the roof construction phase when the 59-year-old fell while walking on the beams. He had accessed the beams via a ladder, however there was no edge protection in place to prevent falls. He fell from a height of just under eight feet. He was taken to hospital where he underwent surgery, but died as a result of his injuries.



Stephen Pywell fell from the wooden roof beams of the house extension

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that James Pitsillides, the director of Affordable Lifestyle Design Limited, had failed to manage the roof work. This included ensuring that roofing subcontractors, including Mr Pywell, were not exposed to health and safety risks.

Pitsillides pleaded guilty and was given a 20-week prison sentence, suspended for two years. The district judge also ordered him to complete 200 hours of unpaid work.

Working at height remains one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death and HSE has detailed guidance on working safely at height.

That guidance states that work at height must be properly planned, appropriately supervised and carried out in a manner that is safe. The “hierarchy of control” prioritizes collective fall prevention measures, for example scaffolding with suitable edge protection. If this isn’t feasible,

fall mitigation measures like airbags or netting should be considered to reduce the consequences of a potential fall. In this case, none of these measures were used, and workers were accessing the roof with a ladder and no additional fall prevention measures in place.

James Pitsillides of Orchard Lane, Great Glen, Leicester, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, relating to an underlying breach of s.3(1) by his company. He received a 20-week prison sentence, suspended for two years and must complete 200 hours of unpaid work. He was also ordered to pay £10,000 in costs at Leicester Magistrates' Court on 7 May 2025.

HSE inspector Phil Gratton said: "Every year, a significant number of incidents occur in construction as a result of poorly planned work at height.

"This was a wholly avoidable incident, caused by the failure to implement simple fall protection measures. Had the company used suitable work equipment or devised a safe system of work, Mr Pywell's tragic death could have been avoided.

"Our thoughts remain with his family and friends."

Further information:

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