

# HSE releases annual workplace fatality figures

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has today released its [annual figures for work-related fatal injuries for 2017/18](#), as well as the number of people known to have died from the asbestos-related cancer, [mesothelioma, in 2016](#).

The provisional annual data for work-related fatal injuries revealed that 144 workers were fatally injured between April 2017 and March 2018 (a rate of 0.45 per 100,000 workers).

Although this represents an increase of nine fatalities from 2016/17, there has been a long-term reduction in the number of fatalities since 1981 and the number has remained broadly level in recent years.

HSE Chair Martin Temple said:

“Despite the fact that Britain’s health and safety record is the envy of much of the world, the increase in the number of workers fatally injured is clearly a source of concern.

“Published in the same week as the 30th anniversary of the Piper Alpha disaster, the figures serve as a reminder of why health and safety is so important and that we must not become complacent as we continue on our mission to prevent all forms of injury, death and ill health at work.”

The new figures show how fatal injuries are spread across the different industrial sectors:

- 38 fatal injuries to construction workers were recorded, accounting for the largest share of any industry. The annual average rate over the last five years in construction is around four times as high as the all industry rate.
- 29 fatal injuries to agricultural workers were recorded. This sector continues to account for a large share of the annual fatality count. It has the highest rate of fatal injury of all the main industry sectors, around 18 times as high as the all industry rate.
- 12 fatal injuries to waste and recycling workers were recorded. Despite being a relatively small sector in terms of employment, the annual average fatal injury rate over the last five years is around 16 times as high as the all industry rate.
- 15 fatal injuries were recorded in both the manufacturing and the transport and storage sectors. Both industries have an annual average rate of fatal injury around 1.5 – 2 times the rate across all industries over the last five years.

The three most common causes of fatal injuries continue to be due to; workers falling from height (35), being struck by a moving vehicle (26) and being struck by a moving object (23), accounting for nearly 60 per cent of fatal

injuries in 2017/18.

The new figures also highlight the risks to older workers; 40 per cent of fatal injuries in 2017/18 were to workers aged 60 or over, even though such workers made up only around 10 per cent of the workforce.

In addition, there were also 100 members of the public fatally injured in incidents connected to work in 2017/18 with just over half of these fatalities occurring on railways.

Mesothelioma, contracted through past exposure to asbestos and one of the few work-related diseases where deaths can be counted directly, killed 2,595 in Great Britain in 2016. The current figures are largely a consequence of occupational asbestos exposures that occurred before 1980. Annual deaths are expected to remain broadly at current levels for the rest of the decade before beginning to decline.

A fuller assessment of work related ill-health and injuries, drawing on HSE's full range of data sources, will be provided as part of the annual Health and Safety Statistics release on 31 October 2018.

## 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. The average rate of fatal injury over the last five years has been 0.45 per 100,000 workers. In each of the last five years, the number of fatal injuries has been:  
2016/17 – 135 workers died  
2015/16 – 147 workers died  
2014/15 – 142 workers died  
2013/14 – 136 workers died  
2012/13 – 150 workers died  
2011/12 – 171 workers died
3. Mesothelioma is a form of cancer that takes many years to develop following the inhalation of asbestos fibres, but is usually rapidly fatal following symptom onset. Annual deaths in Britain increased steeply over the last 50 years, a consequence of mainly occupational asbestos exposures that occurred because of the widespread industrial use of asbestos during 1950-1980. 4. There were 2,595 mesothelioma deaths in 2016 compared with 2,542 deaths in 2015. The long-term increase in mesothelioma deaths has been driven mainly by deaths among those aged 75 and above. Of the deaths in 2016, 398 were among women and 2,197 were among men – again this ratio is broadly similar to previous years. The latest projections suggest there will continue to be around 2,500 deaths per year for the rest of this current decade before annual numbers begin to decline.
4. The published fatal injury statistics also include a breakdown by

country and region. Recent research suggests that variations in fatal injury rates between the countries and regions of Great Britain are largely explained by differences in the industry composition of the workforce between the countries and regions.

5. Britain has consistently had one of the lowest rates of fatal injuries to workers. In 2015 the standardised fatality rate for Britain was one of the lowest of all European countries and compared favourably with other large economies such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Poland: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/pdf/fatalinjuries.pdf>
  6. The reporting of health and safety incidents at work is a statutory requirement, set out under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). A reportable incident includes: a death or specified injury; any accident which does not result in a specified injury, but the injured person still has to take more than seven days off their normal work to recover; a work-related disease; a member of the public being injured as a result of work related activity and taken to hospital for treatment; or a dangerous occurrence, which does not result in a serious injury, but could have done.
  7. The fatal injury figures do not include fatal accidents on non-rail transport systems or work-related deaths from fatal diseases.
  8. The Office of Rail and Road has enforcement responsibility for members of the public fatally injured on railways.
  9. Further information on these statistics can be found at:  
Fatal injuries: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/fatals.htm>  
Mesothelioma deaths: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/mesothelioma/mesothelioma.pdf>
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## **North West roofer sentenced after failing to manage health and safety on site**

A Manchester-based roofer has today been sentenced after breaching health and safety laws.

Greater Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how, on 7 November 2017, Michael Anthony Roden (who also trades as M&R Roofing and Onyx Roofing) and his employee were contracted to carry out roof replacement work at Wheildons Butchers, Manchester. Mr Roden failed to implement any form of edge protection or scaffolding whilst the roofing work was carried out and did not have employers' liability compulsory insurance.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), found that Mr Roden had previously been served with two prohibition notices on two separate

occasions with regards to working from a height with no suitable edge protection. Despite this, Mr Roden continued to work without appropriate scaffolding and, in doing so, put himself and his employee at risk of a fall from height, as well as members of the public who were at risk from any falling materials.

Michael Anthony Roden of Ribble Walk, Droylsden, Manchester pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6 (3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005, Regulation 10 (1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and Section 1 (1) of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment suspended for two years, 240 hours community service and ordered to pay costs of £4,600.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Matt Greenly said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply having the correct control measures and safe working practices in place. Mr Roden chose to save money by not having scaffolding and in doing so put his life at risk as well as the lives of his employee and visitors to the butcher's shop.

"Companies and individuals 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: [legislation.gov.uk/](http://legislation.gov.uk/)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. More information about working from height can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

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## **Company fined after workers suffer serious leg injuries**

An engineering company was sentenced today after two employees were seriously injured during work to dispose of old gas cylinders at the company's site in Hull.

Beverley Magistrates' Court heard how, on 6 January 2017, a worker at Redhall Engineering Services Ltd was asked to decommission approximately eight or nine gas cylinders believed to contain oxygen. The employee laid the cylinders outside in the yard with the pressure release valves open to try and empty out any gas that remained inside. Later, the employee began to remove the pressure release valves from the tops of the cylinders.

On the last cylinder it became apparent that the valve was stuck and could not be removed. Another employee of the company came to help and they attempted to dislodge and remove the valve using a hammer. During this attempt the cylinder and valve separated violently as gas which remained in the cylinder was released. The cylinder fired into the workshop and struck two employees who were standing inside.

Both employees suffered serious injuries to their lower limbs, one sustaining a broken tibia and fibular to both legs, and the other a broken tibia and fibular to his left leg and extensive nerve and tissue damage. Both men required multiple surgeries and spent several weeks in hospital. One of them has still not been able to return to work.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that, at the time of the incident, there was no safe system of work in place for the decommissioning and disposal of old gas cylinders, and the company had not carried out a suitable risk assessment to identify the associated risks.

Redhall Engineering Services Ltd of Winestead Lane, Hull pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £14,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,687.00.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector James Harvey said: "This case highlights the serious risks posed by gas cylinders and how the correct disposal as well as cylinder handling and storage is fundamental to ensuring safety."

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## Suspended sentence for South East scaffolder following unsafe work

A Kent-based scaffolder has been sentenced after unsafe working practices were observed during the erection of scaffolding.

Medway Magistrates' Court heard how, on 19 August 2016, Mr Steven David Connolly was working at a site in Chartham, Kent when an inspector observed him employing unsafe working practices when erecting scaffolding.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Mr Connolly was working unsafely and putting himself at serious risk of falling from the scaffold under construction. He ignored interjections of a HSE inspector, refusing to work safely and instead subjecting her to a torrent of abuse. Mr Connolly then left the scaffold in an unsafe and incomplete condition with no warning for subsequent users.

Mr Steven David Connolly of Greenacres, Lower Kingswood, Surrey pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 6(3) and 8(a) of The Work at Height Regulations 2005. He was sentenced to 24 weeks imprisonment, suspended for 18 months. He has also been subject to the condition of a curfew between 9am and 5pm at his home address for which he will be tagged and ordered to pay costs of £2,000.

After the hearing HSE inspector, Andrew Cousins said: "An already worrying situation was compounded by the defendant's unwarranted abuse of a public official and then leaving the scaffold in a perilous condition. He effectively obstructed the inspector in the exercise of her duty by his attitude, language and behaviour as well as his refusal to provide his identity or who he was working for.

"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. Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known."

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## Company fined after worker fell down a lift shaft

A care home was sentenced after an employee suffered significant injuries after falling around 1.5 metres down a lift shaft.

Northampton Magistrates' Court heard how on 25 September 2016 the employee was using the platform lift to transport the residents' breakfasts from the kitchen to the dining room on a different floor. An interlock system which meant that the lift door could only be opened when the platform was at the right floor was broken. The employee fell down the shaft because the platform was at a lower level.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the door locking mechanism had been broken for about a month prior to this incident and management failed to deal with the known issue of employees overriding the door safety locking mechanism with a screwdriver. The lift had also not been thoroughly examined.

Sutton in the Elms Care Limited of Sutton Lane, Leicester pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and Regulation 9(3)(a)(i) of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations and has been fined £14,000.00 and ordered to pay costs of £2535.90

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Michelle Morrison said "This incident could so easily have been avoided, had the management at the care home ensured that employees were not manually over-riding safety features on this platform lift. Safety features on all work equipment are designed to keep people safe and prevent accidents, such as this one.

"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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