

# Health and Safety Executive turns 50

The national regulator for health and safety in Great Britain today (1 January) celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Created by the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was officially launched on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975.

For the last 50 years it has played a central role in reducing workplace death and injury, helping Great Britain become one of the safest places in the world to work. In 1974, 651 employees were killed at work; HSE's latest annual statistics for 2023/24 show that number had reduced to 138.

Sarah Albon, chief executive of HSE, has said that despite the transformation of Britain's workplaces over the past half century, the mission of the regulator remains as relevant as ever.

Sarah said: "Over the past half century, the Health and Safety Executive has led the way in establishing Great Britain as a safe place to work. As we look ahead to the next 50 years, we recognise there is still much for HSE to take on.

"We're proud of our successes over the last five decades, but the fact remains that any work-related death is a tragedy, and there are still far too many workers suffering ill-health brought about by work activity.

"In 2022, we launched our 10-year strategy, Protecting People and Places, to build on HSE's strong foundations and address our current and future challenges.

"So today, HSE's role goes beyond worker protection to include public safety assurance on a range of issues. Recent years have added new responsibilities, such as becoming the appointed Building Safety Regulator and playing an extended role in chemical regulation, post Brexit.

"It is hard to foresee what the world of work will look like in the next 50 years but as ever, our fundamental principle will continue to be to make sure that those who create risk, take responsibility for controlling risk, and those who fail to do so will be held to account.

"We will continue to work with businesses, with industry, with other regulators and with government, to enable strong economic growth, while we continue to deliver our founding principles as we work to protect people and places."

Minister for Social Security and Disability, Sir Stephen Timms, said: "I'm delighted to wish a very happy 50th anniversary to the Health and Safety Executive.

"Over the last half-century this organisation has been at the heart of efforts to protect people and places across Britain: I would like to thank

them for this vital work.

“As we support more people to get into work through our Get Britain Working White paper, and as we move to strengthen protection for workers, their mission will be as important as ever – now and long into the future.”

**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.

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## **Health and Safety Executive Chief Executive awarded in the New Year's Honours List**

The Chief Executive of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Sarah Albon has been recognised in the New Year's honours list.

Sarah has been appointed a Companion of the Order of Bath for her services to the public sector.

The honours are given by the King and recognise achievements of people from across the United Kingdom.

Sarah Albon said: “It is a great privilege to have been awarded a CB in the King's New Year's Honours list.



HSE CEO Sarah Albon

"I'm proud to be a civil servant working on behalf of the public, and proud of the teams I lead. I have been very fortunate to work with dedicated and talented colleagues throughout my career and I see this award as testament to their achievements as much as my own."

Chair of the HSE Board Sarah Newton added: "It's a pleasure to work with Sarah Albon who over the past five years at HSE has led the organisation through significant challenges and change.

"Since becoming Chief Executive of HSE in 2019, Sarah has provided outstanding leadership, implementing major initiatives of national significance, protecting people and places. I'm pleased to see this award rightly recognise Sarah's contribution, both here at HSE and in her roles across the Civil Service, and I am delighted to congratulate her on this achievement."

Sarah joined HSE in 2019 and led the organisation's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to HSE, Sarah was Chief Executive of the Insolvency Service. Before that, she worked for the Ministry of Justice and its predecessor departments.

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## **Company fined as worker breaks leg from fall**

A company has been fined £120,000 after an employee broke his leg while working on a property in Salisbury.

The man, who was 23 at the time, fell from the roof of the house on Sherfield English Road while working for EE Renewables Limited on 16 December 2022.

He had been adjusting a solar panel when he slid and fell four metres onto the ground below, sustaining a broken femur as a result.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found EE Renewables Limited had not properly planned the work at height and failed to take suitable steps to prevent a fall. The company had been hired by the homeowner to move nine solar panels higher up on the roof.



The company had been hired to move solar panels on the homeowner's roof

HSE guidance can be found at: [Work at height – HSE](#)

EE Renewables Limited, of Salterns Lane, Fareham, Hampshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £120,000 and ordered to pay £4,716 in costs at Swindon Magistrates' Court on 23 December 2024.

HSE inspector Sam Applebee said: "EE Renewables Limited did not properly plan this work so it could be carried out in a safe manner. There were inadequate means of protecting the workers from falling off the roof, with the company failing to provide edge protection."



The worker fell four metres onto the ground below

"Working at height remains one of the biggest causes of injuries and fatalities in Britain, so it is important that companies ensure they implement the correct control measures and safe working practices."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Karen Park and

supported by HSE paralegal officer Rebecca Withell.

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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](#).

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## **Update on investigation into Birmingham fairground incident**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) continues to investigate an incident involving a fairground ride in Birmingham City Centre.

Twelve people were injured as a result of the incident on the evening of 12 December 2024. Two people were taken to hospital and discharged shortly after with minor injuries.

The ride involved in this incident will remain in situ to preserve the scene while the criminal HSE investigation continues.

HSE Principal inspector Matthew Whitaker said: "We appreciate this incident has affected many people during the festive period. We are thoroughly investigating to establish whether there have been any breaches of health and safety law.

"Once our investigation is complete, a decision will then be made on what further action will be taken."

West Midlands Police has released two men on bail pending further enquiries.

Anyone with CCTV or mobile phone footage, which may assist the investigation, has been asked to get in touch with West Midlands Police quoting log 4290 of 12 December.

## **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.
1. The other rides which are currently inside the cordon are being checked by Birmingham City Council. Once those checks have been done, the cordon will reduce to cover the StarFlyer only which will remain in situ to preserve the scene.
1. More information on the HSE's [Enforcement Policy Statement](#) is available.

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## **Food manufacturer fined following machinery incidents**

A food manufacturer has been fined more than half a million pounds after three of its employees suffered serious injuries in separate incidents involving machinery.

David Wood Baking Ltd has been prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The incidents took place at between June and December 2022:

- On 25 June 2022, a woman's arm was drawn into a conveyor belt at the company's site at Lyon Road in Kearsley, Bolton. As a result, she suffered two open fractures and permanent nerve damage in the hand. She underwent three operations and the insertion of two metal plates to repair the damage.
- On 20 July 2022, a man working at the company's site in Sidney Street, Bolton, was injured after becoming trapped in a mechanical mixer. He was attempting a repair to the machine when the lid of the mixer dropped onto his left arm. Neither the supervisor or manager on call were contactable and the employee was stuck in the machine for around 90 minutes, eventually being freed by the fire brigade. The man suffered an open fracture to the arm as well as other fractures and nerve damage in the left forearm.
- On 4 December 2022, also at the Kearsley site, a woman had a finger severed after her hand became entangled in an unguarded drive belt on a machine that she was operating. She was also left with ongoing nerve damage to the hand.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard that the company had a history of poor machinery guarding practice, having previously been convicted and fined £858,000 following an incident in 2021, where a 26-year-old employee had to have his right arm surgically removed following an incident with a piece of machinery.

The HSE investigation into the 2022 incidents found the company failed to keep employees safe from risks posed by food manufacturing machinery, and that training was inadequate and monitoring insufficient to rectify issues.

The risk of injury is higher when machinery becomes unreliable and develops faults, or it is used improperly through inexperience or lack of training. HSE guidance is available [here](#).

David Wood Baking Limited of Calverley Road, Oulton, Leeds, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The company was fined £573,344 and was ordered to pay £12,288 costs at a hearing on 19 December 2024 at Manchester Magistrates' Court.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Jennifer French said:

“This company failed to keep employees safe from risks posed by food manufacturing machinery. The training was inadequate and the monitoring insufficient to rectify issues.

“It is important for industries to understand the potential dangers arising from the use of, or working near, dangerous machinery.

“HSE will always be prepared to use appropriate enforcement when companies fall short of their duties and responsibilities.”

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Iain Jordan.

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