

Bristol landlord fined after member of the public falls from staircase

- Bristol landlord fined under Health and Safety at Work act
- Member of the public fell from a staircase which was found to have fundamental flaws in design
- HSE investigation found lack the staircase was not fit for purpose

A Bristol landlord has been fined after a member of the public sustained significant injuries when they fell from the first-floor landing of an external wooden staircase at a converted property in Bishopston.

Roger Blessitt of Dyers Lane, Iron Acton, was fined £20,000 following an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The incident happened in the early hours of 2 October 2023, when a group attended Unit 4 Merton Road for a social event hosted by one of Mr Blessitt's tenants. A 28-year-old man stepped outside and fell when a section of the wooden handrail failed as he leant against it. He fell from a height of around 11 feet, landing on the concrete-paved surface at ground level, and sustained significant injuries, including to the head.

The HSE investigation found fundamental flaws in the design of the staircase, including that it was notably rotten, deteriorated and weakened. The investigation also found a distinct lack of inspection and maintenance, determining that the staircase was not fit for purpose.



Image of staircase



Image of staircase

Roger Blessitt of Dyers Lane, Iron Acton, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,522 at Bristol Magistrates Court on 13 January 2026.

HSE Inspector Emma Preston said: "Well-designed staircases, built to standard and properly maintained, play a crucial role in keeping people safe. While seeming lower risk, poorly maintained staircases can turn everyday use

into a serious hazard. Routine inspections and maintenance are essential to prevent avoidable injuries.

“In this incident, defects to the staircase would have been readily identified and repaired if an effective inspection and maintenance regime had been in place.

“On behalf of the Health and Safety Executive, I would like to wish the injured person well in his continued recovery.”

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.
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 guidance can be found here [**Managing for health and safety \(HSG65\) – HSE**](#).
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](#).