

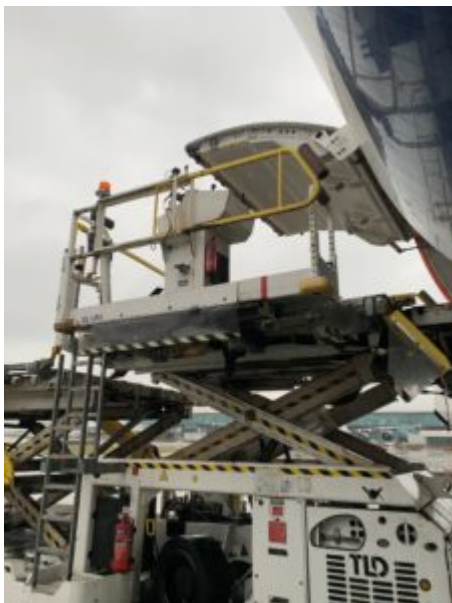
# British Airways fined more than £3million following worker injuries at Heathrow

- 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](#).