

Company fined after death of man whose life was 'unjustly cut short'

A construction company has been fined after a kitchen fitter was crushed to death by a pack of concrete blocks at a site in the Cotswolds.

Martin Dunford, who was 33, was 'very much loved' by his family who say they miss him 'every day' since the incident on 23 January 2020. Martin, from Pocklington in Yorkshire, was killed after being pinned against the side of a lorry loader as two stacks of concrete blocks fell onto him.



Martin Dunford was killed while working on a construction site in the Cotswolds

Martin's sister, Tracey Hunter, provided a statement on behalf of his family.

She said: "Martin went to work and never came home. His life was unjustly cut short.

"Little did he know on that date that he was going to work on a site that had ongoing issues and was not following HSE guidelines for working safely on a construction site.

"Martin was very much loved by his family and friends. He is missed every day and nothing can ever fill the hole that is left by him no longer being here.

"We, his family, and friends are still all navigating throughout this endless period of grief and today's verdict is the start of some sense of justice towards his senseless death."

Martin had been working at Ebrington Rise, near Chipping Campden – a development of 16 three, four and five bedroomed houses being built by Piper Homes Construction Limited.



Martin Dunford was crushed when two stacks of concrete blocks fell on top of him

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Martin had walked around a lorry loader to talk to a driver about how long he would be on site, as he needed access to one of the properties being built. A stack of concrete blocks which had been placed on top of another stack of blocks, which was also supported by a wooden pallet, toppled over onto him, pinning him against the side of the lorry. He sustained severe internal and head injuries and died on site.

Piper Homes Construction Limited, who were the principal contractor on the site, had failed to ensure that a suitable, level storage area was provided for the safe offloading of construction materials. The company had also failed to ensure that wooden pallets in a suitable condition were used for the storage of construction materials and that persons were excluded from delivery areas. [HSE guidance on pallet safety](#) is available.

Piper Homes Construction Limited, which is currently in liquidation, of Lace Market Square, Nottingham, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015. The company was fined £300,000 and ordered to pay £5,236 in costs at Cheltenham Magistrates Court on 29 April 2025.



The company had also failed to ensure that wooden pallets in a suitable condition were used for the storage of construction materials

HSE inspector James Lucas said: "This was an entirely avoidable incident and our thoughts remain with Martin's family.

"Storage of construction materials should be properly planned and managed, to ensure that if materials are stored at height the necessary measures are in place to prevent them from falling and potentially injuring persons.

"Storage areas should be level and accessories such as wooden pallets should be regularly inspected to ensure that they are in suitable condition to be used to store materials.

"Had this been done on this particular site, Martin would have returned home safely to his family."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Arfaq Nabi and paralegal officer Jason Dix

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 guidance on pallet safety](#) is available.
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](#).

