

Farmer jailed after three-year-old child killed by vehicle

- Albie Speakman, 3, died in July 2022 after being struck by a telehandler driven by his father.
- Neil Speakman was sentenced on Friday for failing to ensure Albie's health and safety.
- Mr Speakman should have followed HSE guidance, says lead inspector.

A farmer has been jailed after he failed to ensure the health and safety of his three-year-old son.

Albie Speakman lost his life on 16 July 2022 after he was run over by a telehandler that was being driven by his father Neil Speakman.

A joint investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Greater Manchester Police found Mr Speakman failed to ensure Albie was kept safe from work activities on his family's farm in Bury, Greater Manchester. The telehandler being driven by Mr Speakman was in poor condition.

Children should be kept safe from farming work activities by keeping them in a safe area, such as a farmhouse or a securely fenced play area. Further advice can be found [here](#).

Mr Speakman, 39, was using the telehandler to move woodchip into bags while Albie was left playing in a small unfenced garden at the front of the house on Bentley Hall Farm.



The telehandler that was being driven by Mr Speakman

The three-year-old wandered onto the farm yard and was fatally struck by the telehandler as it was being reversed.

HSE inspector Mike Lisle said: “This tragedy could easily have been avoided if our guidance was followed.

“Our guidance clearly states children should be kept away from farming activities and work traffic, remaining in a safe space, such as a securely fenced play area.

“Farms are workplaces, but often have a farm house within the grounds. This makes the provision of safe areas for children even more important.”

The HSE and Greater Manchester Police investigation identified that Mr Speakman failed to ensure there was a safe segregated area for Albie to play in so that he was kept safe from farm workplace activity. Instead, Albie was allowed to move around the farm yard while vehicles were being driven.

The investigation found Mr Speakman had borrowed the telehandler from a neighbour, and while he had previously used the vehicle, he was not appropriately trained and had not properly considered the risks involved with using it. The telehandler was missing a wing mirror on the passenger’s side, while the wing mirror on the driver’s side was dirty – reducing Mr Speakman’s visibility as he operated the vehicle.

Neil Speakman, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 after being charged by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

He was handed a 12-month prison sentence and ordered to pay £2,000 in costs at Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court on 28 February 2025. Mr Speakman must serve at least six months in prison.

Following a trial at Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court, Mr Speakman was found not guilty of gross negligence manslaughter in February 2025. This charge was brought by the CPS following a Greater Manchester Police investigation.

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. 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](#).