

Fire extinguisher recycling company fined after 'thoughtful and kind man' killed at work

- Craig Pearson, 37, sustained fatal injuries when fire extinguisher exploded
- Father-of-four described by his fiancé Rachelle as “bubbly, thoughtful and kind”
- HSE investigation found Fire Protection Recycling Ltd had failed to ensure the proper safeguards were in place for discharging of fire extinguishers at its site in West Midlands

A waste and recycling company in the West Midlands has been fined after a man described as ‘thoughtful and kind’ was killed while discharging a fire extinguisher.

Craig Pearson, 37, a father-of-four from Dudley, was working for Fire Protection Recycling Limited, at its site in Oldbury when the incident happened on 7 March 2023.

He had been processing powder fire extinguishers which were at the end of their serviceable life. While working on a cartridge type fire extinguisher, it had a sudden release of pressure and exploded, striking him in the head. After the incident, the fire extinguisher was found embedded in the ceiling of the workroom.



Craig Pearson died as a result of his injuries

Craig was treated at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for his injuries, but despite the efforts of medical staff, sadly died the next day, on 8 March.

He leaves behind his fiancée Rachelle, siblings John and Cheryl, and his four children.

Craig's fiancé Rachelle said: *"Craig was bubbly, Mr funny and adventurous.*

"There was never a day where we didn't laugh. He was thoughtful, kind and always thought about my needs and was helpful to others.

"I often sit and wonder what life would be like if Craig was here now. Would we be married? What would we be doing together?

"I take each day as it comes. I try my best to keep life as normal as possible and do my best to ensure my children are happy."

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Fire Protection Recycling Limited failed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees while at work and while they were recycling these types of fire extinguishers.



The fire extinguisher that exploded

The company had failed to conduct a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, and their systems of work for processing these types of fire extinguishers were not suitable. They did not have proper storage arrangements for old extinguishers waiting for processing, and there wasn't a suitable restraint system for containing fire extinguishers when they were being discharged, to prevent them ejecting dangerous parts.

HSE states employers must provide plant and systems of work which are so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health.



HSE inspectors also found old extinguishers were not being stored properly

HSE inspector Heather Campbell said:

"Our thoughts today are with the family of Craig Pearson, a young dad of four.

"He should have returned home safely to his family at the end of his working day but because of the failings of Fire Protection Recycling Limited, he did not.

"I hope the sentence handed down leaves companies in no doubt that we will not hesitate to take action against those that fail to protect their employees."

Fire Protection Recycling Limited, of Pearsall Drive, Oldbury, West Midlands, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay £17,034.25 in costs at Birmingham Magistrates' Court on 14 September 2026.

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Matthew Reynolds and paralegal officer Lynne Thomas.

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: [Safety requirements for pressure testing GS4](#)
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](#).