

Firm fined after blind man falls into open manhole

A family-run plumbing business has been fined £4,000 after a blind man fell into an open manhole.

The 62-year-old registered-blind resident of Hanover Court, a sheltered housing development in Banchory, Aberdeenshire, suffered injuries to his left leg in the fall on February 19, 2020.

The manhole at the sheltered housing development had been left open by A & R Services while a blockage was being cleared.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident found that A & R Services failed to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk posed by the open manhole.

The company had failed to put in place barriers, signage or other protective measures to prevent anyone from accessing the pathway leading to the open manhole.

In addition, other than leaning the manhole cover against a door, no signage, barriers, guarding or other protective measures were put in place to prevent pedestrians from falling into the manhole while using the door.

A & R Services, of Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £4,000 at Aberdeen Sheriff Court on December 14, 2022.

HSE principal inspector Niall Miller said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

Notes to Editors:

1. The [Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available