

Global glass bottle maker fined £600k after worker injured

- Man suffered burns after molten glass was spilled.
- Protective door missing from shovel loader for two years.
- HSE guidance is available:

A global glass bottle manufacturer has been fined £600,000 after a worker was burnt by molten glass and hot water spilling into his cab.

O-I Glass Limited pleaded guilty to one charge following the incident at its Glasshouse Loan site in Alloa on 3 February 2024.

A 32-year-old man suffered scald burns to 8 percent of his body but has since been able to make a full recovery.



The basement of the site and the skips being used to collect waste product

The company, which employs around 500 people at the site, continually operates furnaces that are used to smelt raw materials, from which glass bottles are manufactured. The furnaces and production lines are located on the floor above two glass reject basements, which house a number of large, moveable skips. It is into these skips that molten or formed glass is rejected, via chutes, during the production process. Coolant water runs down each chute with the rejected molten or formed glass, which in turn generates very hot water and large amounts of steam.

Due to the continuous nature of the operation, the skips would quickly fill and sometimes reject material and water would spill from the skips onto the basement floors. Employees working in these basements used shovel loaders to clear this spilled material from the floors, which was then emptied into other skips.

On the day in question, the worker had been operating a shovel loader, clearing the waste molten glass and hot water from the basement floor. However, there was no protective door on the cab of the vehicle, so some of that material spilled from the bucket onto him.



The shovel loader with missing protective door

When it was first provided for use, the loader was fitted with a protective door incorporating a glass window, in front of the cab. However, an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) established that the protective door had been missing since March 2022. It had been removed from the vehicle after being damaged, and although this was reported to the site engineer at the time, no action was taken to replace it. In the almost two years that went by, other operatives had reported being struck or having footwear burnt by molten glass falling into the cab.

HSE guidance, specifically the publication “A guide to workplace transport safety – HSE (HSG136) paragraph 219 & 220: states that ‘vehicles should be fitted with additional protection for those working ...in an inhospitable working environment... where there is a risk of being struck by falling objects, the vehicle should be fitted with a falling-object protective structure (FOPS)’ and Safe use of work equipment – HSE (Approved Code of Practice to the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER))

Following the incident, the company removed the vehicle from service, and it didn’t return until June 2024, after being fitted with a steel front door, incorporating a glass window with protective wire mesh.

O-I Glass Limited, of Edinburgh Way, Harlow, Essex, pleaded guilty to Regulation 5 (1) of The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and section 33(1) of Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 for failing to maintain the vehicle in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair. The company was fined £600,000 at Stirling Sheriff Court on 23 September 2025.

HSE inspector Kathy Gostick said: “This was an avoidable ordeal for a young worker. It is sheer luck he has been able to recover from his serious injuries.

“This company’s employees worked in this environment with a safety critical part of the loader missing for a period of almost two years.

“Although the protective front door had been removed and reported to the on-site engineer, drivers had continued to work and operate the loader with it missing.

“Some operatives even described being struck or having footwear burnt by molten glass falling into the cab as a result.

“When work equipment is being selected, its suitability for the environment it is going to be used in must be risk assessed. In this case the protective door was not suitable to protect against impacts from hot and molten glass and therefore was often broken and in the end never replaced. Had an appropriate door been selected and maintained in place this accident would not have occurred.”

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 Scotland can be found [here](#).