

Grounds maintenance company fined after employee killed operating ride-on lawnmower

- Worker was killed when the ride-on mower he was operating ended up in village pond.
- HSE investigation found no suitable site-specific risk assessment had been carried out.
- Safety-critical roll-over protection system had been removed from the machine.

A grounds maintenance company has been fined after an employee was killed while operating a ride-on lawnmower near Ripon.



the lawnmower involved

Kamil Grygieniec, 23, from Northallerton, was cutting grass around a village pond in North Stainley on 8 October 2021 when the ride-on mower he was operating descended a steep incline and ended up in it.

The mower was being used without a safety-critical roll-over protection system (ROPS) fitted.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that MHS Countryside Management Limited had failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient site-specific risk assessment for the work being undertaken.

The investigation also established that the mower's roll-over protection system (ROPS) had been removed at some point prior to the work taking place. ROPS are designed to protect operators in the event of a machine overturning and are a critical safety feature when working on uneven or sloping ground.



where the incident took place

Suitable risk assessment is essential when operating ride-on machinery, particularly where there is a risk of overturning on slopes or near water. Employers must ensure equipment is appropriate for the terrain and fitted with necessary safety features to protect operators. Find out more on our website here [Risk assessment: Template and examples – HSE](#).

MHS Countryside Management Limited, of Bishop Auckland, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £27,000 and ordered to pay £11,166 in costs at York Magistrates' Court on the 17 February 2026.

Family tributes

Kamil's mother and father said:

"The pain I feel every day since that tragedy is unimaginable, I do not wish that on anybody. That day I lost part of me.

"I will never be able to hug him, tell him how much I love him. I will never receive flowers from him, will never meet his wife or his children. Kamil was my physical and mental support.

"That day was his last day at that workplace and it happened to be the last day of his short life."

"I don't know what life holds for the future for me, but what I am certain of is it will not be as full or as happy now that Kamil has gone from our lives.

"What makes it even worse, I believe his death could have been prevented and should never have happened."

After the hearing, HSE Inspector Darian Dundas said:

"This is a profoundly tragic case which is made all the more harrowing because the safety feature designed to prevent incidents like this had been removed from the lawnmower – leading to the fatal turn of events which has robbed a family of their loved one.

"The completion of a suitable and sufficient site-specific risk assessment is vital before undertaking work activities and ensures appropriate action can

be taken to eliminate hazards or, where this is not possible, to properly control the risks.

“In this case, the failure to assess the risks and ensure suitable safety measures were in place resulted in a tragic and entirely avoidable loss of life.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Iain Jordan and supported by paralegal officer Stephen Grabe.

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 [Risk assessment: Template and examples – HSE](#)
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](#).