

# HSE urges Blackburn businesses to take five steps to become COVID-secure

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is out and about talking to businesses in Blackburn and the surrounding areas to ensure they are COVID-secure to help tackle the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

To support the understanding of any patterns in the confirmed coronavirus cases in the area, HSE is working alongside Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council in the regulation of workplace health and safety and alongside local public health authorities. Inspectors are out visiting businesses across Blackburn and surrounding areas, putting employers on the spot and checking that they are complying with the latest guidance.

To be COVID-secure means businesses need to put in place workplace adjustments, keep up to date with the latest guidance and put measures in place to manage the risk and protect workers and others. There are [five practical steps](#) that businesses can take to do that:

- Step 1. carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment
- Step 2. develop increased cleaning, hand washing and hygiene procedures
- Step 3. take all reasonable steps to help people work from home
- Step 4. maintain 2m social distancing where possible
- Step 5. where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk

Francine Cheney, HSE construction head of operations said: “The number of confirmed cases of the disease are currently high in the area. We are talking to local businesses and inspecting sites in and around Blackburn to understand how they are managing risks in line with their specific business activity.

“Becoming COVID-secure needs to be the priority for all businesses to tackle the rise in the number of cases in the area. It is a legal duty for employers to protect their workers and others from harm and this includes taking reasonable steps to control the risk and protect people from coronavirus. This means making workplace adjustments to become COVID-secure. We advise employers to work with their employees when implementing changes, to help increase confidence with workers, customers and the local community.”

As inspections across the country are ongoing, HSE has been utilising a number of different ways to gather intelligence and reach out to businesses across Blackburn with a combination of site visits, phone calls and through the collection of supporting visual evidence such as photos and video footage.

HSE and local authority inspectors are finding some common issues across a range of sectors that include: failing to provide arrangements for monitoring, supervising and maintaining social distancing, failing to introduce an adequate cleaning regime – particularly at busy times of the day

– and providing access to welfare facilities to allow employees to frequently wash their hands with warm water and soap.

To support businesses, HSE are providing advice and guidance to manage risk and protect workers. Where some employers are not managing the risk, HSE will take action which can range from the provision of specific advice, issuing enforcement notices, stopping certain work practices until they are made safe and, where businesses fail to comply, this could lead to prosecution.

Sally Nicholson, HSE head of operations in Lancashire said: “All businesses are in scope for inspections, that means any size business in any sector can receive an unannounced inspection to ensure they are COVID-secure. By making sure that businesses have measures in place to manage the risks, we can benefit the health of the local community as well as support the UK economy.”

For the latest information and relevant Safer Workplaces guidance, see [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

**Ends**

#### **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. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. For HSE’s working safely guidance see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm>

The post [HSE urges Blackburn businesses to take five steps to become COVID-secure](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

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## **[Plumbing and heating company fined after employee suffered burns in explosion](#)**

A plumbing and heating company has been fined after an employee suffered serious burns following an explosion at a domestic property in Preesall, Lancashire.

Blackpool Magistrates' Court heard that on 13 March 2019, John Leadley Limited had been replacing a gas boiler in the hallway of a bungalow. As part of this work, an employee was soldering new water pipes when there was a sudden explosion, which caused serious burn injuries. The homeowners were in the property at the time of the explosion and were also put at risk of serious injury.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that a flammable atmosphere had developed within the hallway of the property, which was subsequently ignited by a blow torch. A gas supply pipe has been cut prior to installation of the new boiler, but the open end of that pipe had not been sealed with an appropriate fitting. It was also identified that the gas supply had not been correctly isolated from the property, allowing gas to pass through the open-ended pipe into the hallway, creating the flammable atmosphere.

The company, John Leadley Limited, of Victoria Road East, Thornton Cleveleys pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £5,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,756.35.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Anthony Banks said: "The injuries sustained to this employee could so easily have been avoided, simply by John Leadley Limited carrying out the correct control measures and safe working practices.

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

The post [Plumbing and heating company fined after employee suffered burns in explosion](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

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## **Council fined following fatality caused by a tree branch striking a moving vehicle**

Wirral Borough Council has been fined after a branch from a tree fell and struck the vehicle of a pregnant mother while she was driving with her two children.

Elizabeth Stear suffered injuries and later, the sad loss of her prematurely born baby.

Liverpool Magistrates' Court heard that on the morning of 10 November 2016, 39-year-old Elizabeth, who was 36 weeks pregnant, had been performing the

daily school run. She was driving along the A551 Arrowse Park Road with her 13-year-old daughter and six-year-old son when her moving vehicle was struck by a large branch falling from a mature horse chestnut tree. The branch broke through the windscreen and front driver window and struck the right side of Elizabeth's stomach. She was taken to hospital with suspected major trauma and her baby girl, Lucia Jayne Stear, was delivered by an emergency caesarean, living for 15 hours before sadly passing away.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the large branch, which fell had a crack on its upper edge where it was joined to the main trunk. It had begun to separate from the main trunk for at least one growing season before the failure. The tree, located within the boundary of Arrowse Park, adjacent to the highway, had not been inspected for at least 13 years. Wirral Borough Council failed to identify and manage the risks from falling trees and branches, and failed to implement a robust system of inspection of trees in its remit despite a similar incident occurring on Arrowse Park Road in January 2015.

Wirral Borough Council of Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The Local Authority was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay costs of £49,363.

Elizabeth Stear said "Usually when you think of your children, you remember things like holidays, achievements, sports days, family days out, their favourite foods etc. We don't have those memories for Lucia. We would like to thank our family and friends, Aintree Hospital, Liverpool Women's Hospital neonatal team, the midwives, Honeysuckle team, the Police and Claire House who are still supporting me today."

After the hearing, HSE inspector Rohan Lye said: "There are no winners in this sad case. Councils have a duty to proactively assess and control risks to members of the public. This tragedy could so easily have been avoided if the risk had been identified, warnings had been heeded and an adequate tree management system had been implemented.

"Tragically, due to these systemic failures, Elizabeth and Alex, together with their two children have been left without Lucia and have had to restructure their lives from the devastating impact they have each individually experienced."

The post [Council fined following fatality caused by a tree branch striking a moving vehicle](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

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## [Figures reveal that numbers of people](#)

# killed have fallen, yet agriculture continues to have the highest rates of worker fatal injury

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has today published a report that reveals agriculture has the worst rate of worker fatal injury in Great Britain. Last year, 21 people were killed in agriculture, one was a child.

The report, *Fatal injuries in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Great Britain 2019/20*, has been published to coincide with the start of Farm Safety Week (20 – 24 July). Led by the Farm Safety Foundation charity, the week shines a light on safety and wellbeing in the sector. The HSE statistics highlight that agriculture continues to have the worst rate of worker fatal injury; eighteen times higher than the average rate across all industries.

Transport-related incidents, such as overturning vehicles or being struck by moving vehicles, were responsible for more deaths than any other cause last year. Around half of the workers killed were aged 55 years or older, with older workers being disproportionately most at risk of fatal injuries on farms. The youngest person killed last year was a 4-year old child.

HSE's Head of Agriculture, Adrian Hodkinson, said: "Agriculture is a vitally important part of our economy and has played an essential role during the coronavirus outbreak. However agriculture still has the poorest safety record of any occupation in GB. Despite the very welcome reduction in numbers of deaths – 18 less than the previous year – much more remains to be done in this sector.

"Each individual death is a huge and devastating loss to their family, friends and the wider community. It is not acceptable that agriculture and forestry continue to have such high rates of people being killed, and we will continue to push for a wholesale change of attitude and behaviours toward safety within the sectors.

"Farm Safety Week is a timely reminder for the agriculture community to manage and control risk and not become complacent on farms. Death, injuries and cases of ill-health, including poor mental health, are not an inevitable part of farming. The safety and wellbeing of people working and living on farms must be treated seriously and things must be done the right way every day, not just this week.

"The recent coronavirus outbreak at a farm shows how important it is for everyone in agriculture to take effective steps to control the risk of transmission and protect people from the virus. Inspectors are carrying out spot checks in workplaces to make sure they are COVID-secure and complying with the law and government guidance on social distancing, hygiene practices and supervision."

HSE urges farmers to keep children safe whilst they stay at home on the farm during COVID-19 restrictions. Children must not be allowed in the farm workplace unless very carefully supervised. It is illegal to carry children under 13 in the cab of an agricultural vehicle and it is unsafe. For guidance on this, see [what a good farm looks like](#). The full report and more information on working safely in agriculture are available on the [HSE website](#).

## 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. The report highlights trends and provides summaries of each fatality involving employees, the self-employed and members of the public. The full report along with summaries of the circumstances of the individual fatal injuries can be read at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/resources/fatal.htm>
3. Detailed data and tables can be seen at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/fatal.htm>
4. Farm Safety Week is an initiative led by the Farm Safety Foundation and supported by the Farm Safety Partnerships, The Health and Safety Executive, Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland and the Health & Safety Authority, Ireland.
5. HSE continues to work with stakeholders across the farming and forestry sector to keep up the pressure to manage risk in the workplace to reduce the likelihood of serious injury, ill health and death. In relation to our response to Covid-19, this includes working with others e.g. Public Health Authorities and Government Departments.
6. HSE Inspectors and Local Authority Inspectors are visiting workplaces across a range of sectors following up any reports or concerns about safety in the workplace including over Covid-19 and ensuring compliance. HSE is carrying out proactive checks to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to protect workers from COVID-19.

The post [Figures reveal that numbers of people killed have fallen, yet agriculture continues to have the highest rates of worker fatal injury](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

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## [The Health and Safety Executive](#)

# Welcomes Government's Draft Bill to Improve Building and Fire Safety in England

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has welcomed the publication of the government's draft Building Safety Bill, which aim to create the biggest change in building safety for a generation.

The publication of the draft bill, on Monday 20 July, follows the announcement made by Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP in January that HSE would create a new Building Safety Regulator (BSR), with the aim of implementing reforms that go further and faster to improving building safety following the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

The BSR will oversee the new, more stringent building safety regime for higher-risk buildings, which prioritises blocks of flats more than 18m high or more than six storeys tall in England. It will also have a broader oversight role in the safety and performance of buildings; and in promoting improvements in the competence and organisational capability of all those working in the built environment.

HSE Chief Executive Sarah Albon said: "HSE fully supports the measures set out in the draft bill to move forward and enhance building safety across England.

"HSE is currently working with other parts of government, key regulators and industry to establish how the new legislation can be implemented in a practical way and create a new regime that improves building safety standards and competence across the industry."

HSE will also lead the government's Joint Regulators Group (JRG), which will provide coordinated leadership to local authority and fire & rescue regulators during the transition to the new regulatory regime. It will support the development of close working arrangements between the BSR and local regulators, while continuing to work with early adopters to trial new safety approaches.

The JRG will be chaired by Peter Baker, Director of the Building Safety and Construction Division of HSE said: "The BSR will create a new era for building safety, working with wider government, local regulators, industry and residents we want to ensure that a tragedy like Grenfell Tower never happens again.

"Through appropriate use of its enforcement powers under the new regulatory framework, the BSR will ensure that building safety risks are being properly managed and controlled throughout the lifecycle of a building. It will also hold those with legal duties to account for significant failures."

He added: "In my role as chair of the JRG I will work together with members

to ensure that the proposals are both robust and practical.”

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