

# Health and Safety Executive Webinar: Offshore UKCS Process Isolations – Regulatory Expectations and Learnings

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is hosting a webinar on process isolations in the offshore oil and gas sector, aimed at driving improvement in this critical safety area.

The free online event will take place on 4 December 2025 from 10:30 to 11:30.

## **Why this matters**

Process isolations are a key barrier to preventing major accident hazards when carrying out intrusive work offshore. They involve systems of work and mechanical equipment, such as valves, to prevent the release of flammable and hazardous substances.

HSE continues to investigate loss of containment incidents associated with isolations and finds significant failings during inspections. Process isolations therefore remain a focus area during duty holder interventions.

## **What attendees will learn**

The webinar will reinforce legal requirements and expected practice in the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) offshore and oil and gas sector, using key findings from incidents and regulatory inspections to highlight failings and provide learning opportunities.

Topics covered will include:

- Potential major accident hazards during use of isolations
- Isolation design and selection of standards
- Risk assessment and use of variations from benchmark standards
- Planning and preparation of isolations, including draining, venting, purging and flushing
- Installation, including integrity testing
- Training and competence
- Monitoring, audit and review

The seminar will be presented by Kelly Rose, Editor, Health & Safety Matters, Ashley Hall, Process Safety Specialist, HSE and James McCrae, Process Safety Specialist, HSE.

## **Who should attend**

This webinar is intended for all those involved in isolation activities for offshore installations in the UKCS, from design, installation, approval and audit.

All attendees will receive a CPD certificate.

Howard Harte, Operations Manager (Offshore Regulation) at the Health and Safety Executive, said: "A key part of our role is to highlight the challenges and failings our inspectors identify in the industry, and process isolations continue to lead to incidents requiring HSE investigations.

"This webinar will share our findings to help companies drive self-improvement, as we look to collaborate and work together to improve safety across the industry."

### **Registration**

To register for this webinar, visit [Offshore UKCS Process Isolations – Regulatory Expectations and Learnings](#).

Registration closes on 3 December 2025.

For registration queries, contact Western Business Media Ltd on [marketing@westernbusiness.media](mailto:marketing@westernbusiness.media) or 01342 314 300.

### **Further Information:**

1. The webinar is delivered by the Health and Safety Executive
2. The event is organised by Western Business Media Ltd
3. By registering, attendees agree to be contacted by the organiser and event sponsors

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## **Much loved man lost his life 'due to cost of 50 pence screw' say family**

- Alban Watts died due to a 'basic and simple' failure.
- Dangerous parts of machinery had inadequate guarding.
- HSE guidance on working with machinery is available.

The family of a much loved man from Cumbria have spoken of their anger that his life was worth less than "the cost of a 50 pence screw".

Alban Watts was killed while working for egg producer Bell Mount Farming Limited at its site in Great Salkeld in Penrith on 11 January 2023. The 61-year-old, who lived in the village of Blencow, died after being strangled, when his clothes became entangled in a hen feeding system at the farm.



Alban Watts was killed when his clothing became entangled in unguarded machinery

Speaking after the company was fined £50,000, his brother Martin and sister Louise Robinson spoke of their sadness and anger at his death.

"Losing Alban has taken a part of our trio, without him we are an incomplete unit," the siblings said.

"Not a day goes by where he is not missed.

"Alban worked at Bell Mount for 12 years and he enjoyed his job. But it's taken the life of a member of our family for them to do their job.

"We are angry that his life was worth less than a 50p screw to a multi-million pound company. Such a small item could have saved his life. You can't replace a person who meant so much to us."



The machine was examined at HSE's site in Buxton

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Bell Mount Farming Limited failed to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery – in this case the rotating sprocket of the drive mechanism which powered the feeding system in the poultry shed. The system operated for three minute periods at set times throughout the day; the remainder of the time it was motionless.

Mr Watts was working alone in one of the poultry sheds when his clothing came into contact with the unguarded sprocket during one of these feeding periods, causing it to become entangled. The investigation also identified that the guard designed to prevent such access was not fixed in place and could simply be lifted off.

Further examination of the guard identified that the bolt holes in the guard were stripped, preventing it from being secured to the frame of the drive unit. Additionally, these holes in the guard did not align with those in the frame, making it impossible for the guard to be fixed securely.



One of the bolt holes on the guard

Alban's mother Noreen said her son was an accomplished mechanic, joiner and carpenter and that his death had been 'cruel'.

"Mere words cannot express the horror and distress of hearing such an awful death and I can only hope Alban didn't suffer," she said.

"I have now had to go through every parent's nightmare of surviving their own child, in tragic circumstances.

"Above all, I want lessons to be learnt from this tragedy.

"Due to the lack of a machine guard, my dear son Alban has been killed and taken from me."

HSE guidance states employers must take effective measures to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery. This will normally be fixed guards which prevent persons coming into contact with those parts and require a tool to be removed; this was the expected control in this instance. Further guidance can be found here [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) – HSE](#).

Bell Mount Farming Limited, of Stainton, Penrith, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1)(a) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The company was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £6,038 in costs at a hearing at Warrington Magistrates' Court on 20 November 2025.

After the hearing HSE Inspector Matthew Shepherd said: "What is most tragic about this case is the failure of the company was such a basic and simple one.

“What was such an easy fault to fix cost a much loved man his life and left a family without a brother and a son.

“Preventing access to dangerous parts of machinery is a well-known and long-standing part of any health and safety management system.

“Alban’s death shows the importance of ensuring machinery is adequately guarded and the devastating consequences of getting it wrong.

“We will not hesitate to take action against companies which do not do all that they should to keep people safe.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Matthew Reynolds and paralegal officer Farhat Basir.

#### **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 [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) – 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](#).

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## **Manufacturing company fined after driver suffers life-changing injuries in fall from HGV trailer**

- Driver sustained a brain injury and multiple fractures after falling from trailer
- Company failed to implement adequate fall prevention measures
- Penn Elcom Limited fined £80,000

A manufacturing company has been fined £80,000 after a visiting lorry driver sustained life-changing injuries when he fell from a trailer during loading

operations at a site in County Durham.

Graham Davis, 65, a Class 1 driver employed by Dobbs Logistics Ltd, was delivering and collecting goods for Penn Elcom Limited on 18 November 2024 when the incident occurred.

During the loading process, Mr Davis was manually moving cages to and from the cage carrier. When one wheel of a cage became stuck, the cage fell and Mr Davis stepped backwards, falling from the trailer. He suffered a brain injury and multiple fractures. He has been unable to work since the incident.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Penn Elcom Limited failed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and visiting workers by not having suitable and sufficient measures in place to prevent falls from height during loading and unloading operations.



Screen shot from the CCTV footage featuring the lorry that Graham Davis fell from.

HSE defines work from height as work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. A step-by-step guide to working from height and further information is available at [HSE's website](#).

HSE's guide to [workplace transport safety](#) provides advice for employers on what they need to do to comply with the law and reduce risk. Following this guidance would have identified the risks during the loading process and shown that the risk could have been eliminated entirely by changing how the work was undertaken.



Penn Elcom Limited, of 1st Floor Sackville House, 143-149 Fenchurch Street, London, EC3M 6BN, pleaded guilty to breaching sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay £4537.32 in costs at South Tyneside Magistrates' Court on 18 November 2025.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Beth Chapman said: "Falls from vehicles account for around a third of all workplace transport injuries, many occurring during loading and unloading operations. This was a wholly avoidable incident caused by the company's failure to identify the risks of working at height and implement suitable control measures.

"Had Penn Elcom properly assessed the risks and taken action to prevent falls from height, Mr Davis would not have suffered these life-changing injuries. Employers must take effective measures to prevent falls during loading and unloading, either by avoiding work at height altogether or by using appropriate equipment and safe systems of work."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Jonathan Bambro and paralegal officer, Zahra Shafique.

#### **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. HSE guidance on loading and unloading vehicles is available at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg136.pdf>
4. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).
5. Further details on the latest HSE news releases are available at [here](#).

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## **Film studio fined £6,000 after disturbance of asbestos during maintenance works**

- Employees exposed to asbestos risk during dismantling of wall panelling.
- Asbestos had not been identified in previous surveys of the studio buildings.
- HSE investigation found failures in assessment, training and emergency

arrangements.

A film studio in Hertfordshire has been fined £6,000 after poor management of minor building works led to the disturbance of asbestos – putting employees at risk of exposure to asbestos fibres.

Maintenance staff at Elstree Film Studios in Borehamwood had been asked to remove acoustic wall panelling from one of the studio buildings in preparation for the replacement of the studio doors by an external contractor.

Employees were told that no asbestos was present and began dismantling the panels using claw hammers and crowbars on 22 July 2022.

Shortly after starting work, one employee identified a layer of insulation that he believed to be asbestos and immediately stopped. Subsequent testing confirmed the presence of asbestos – Amosite/Chrysotile and Crocidolite – which required licensed removal.



Section of the removed wall panelling containing asbestos

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive found that neither the studio's asbestos management surveys nor the specific refurbishment surveys had considered the wall surfaces within stages 7, 8, and 9.

As a result, the acoustic wall panelling dismantled by employees fell outside the scope of any assessment. The investigation also identified failings in training and inadequate emergency arrangements to deal with asbestos disturbance.

[HSE guidance](#) states that employers must not undertake work liable to expose people to asbestos unless a suitable assessment has been carried out and a proper plan is in place. This often includes the use of licensed contractors with appropriate controls to manage the risks.

Elstree Film Studios Limited, of Civic Offices, Elstree Way, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 5, 10 and 15 of the



Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. The company was fined £6,000 and ordered to pay £6,790 in costs and a £2,000 victim surcharge at Stevenage Magistrates' Court on 20 November 2025. All sums are to be paid within seven days.

HSE Inspector Stephen Manley said:

"Poor management of asbestos can lead to workers being exposed to the harmful effects of asbestos. Those in control of buildings must ensure they have a suitable assessment in place, and those undertaking intrusive work should be provided with appropriate information – which, for this type of work, will often require a specific localised survey by a competent person."

The prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski and Paralegal Officer Helen Hugo.

#### **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 at [Asbestos – 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](#).

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## **[Animal feed manufacturer fined £500,000 after worker seriously injured](#)**

- Worker sustained serious injuries when his foot was trapped in machinery.
- Company had failed to prevent access to dangerous parts.
- HSE guidance is available.

A Yorkshire animal feed manufacturer has been fined £500,000 after a worker lost part of his foot when it was entangled in machinery.

William Thompson (York) Limited pleaded guilty after failing to prevent

access to a rotating auger – a tool consisting of a central shaft with a blade wrapped around it – which is designed to transport excess feed away from a press.



The pressing machine at the factory

The 41-year-old had been working as a supervisor at the company's Jubilee Mill site in York on 14 November 2023. At the time of the incident, the man had been trying to resolve a maintenance issue with the machinery. However, he was able to open the press while its parts remained in operation at significant speed. His foot became entangled in the rotating auger and he sustained injuries so serious he remained in hospital for a period of six weeks.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that William Thompson (York) Limited failed to prevent access to dangerous parts of the machinery and also to carry out a suitable risk assessment of the work being done.



A CCTV still shows only two bars of guarding above the auger – this allowed the worker's foot to slip through to the blade below

HSE guidance states employers must take effective measures to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery. This will normally be by fixed guarding but where routine access is needed, interlocked guards may be needed to stop the movement of dangerous parts before a person can reach the danger zone. Further guidance can be found here: [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) – HSE](#).

William Thompson (York) Limited, of Main Street, Malton, North Yorkshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974. The company was fined £500,000 and ordered to pay £4,455 in costs at York Magistrates court on 18 November 2025.

HSE Inspector Shauna Halstead said: “This company’s failures resulted in a man sustaining life-changing injuries.

“Too many workers are injured or killed every year because of failures to guard dangerous parts of machinery.

“Companies must implement safe working practices when carrying out maintenance operations.

“We will not hesitate to take action against companies which do not do all they should to keep people safe when working with machinery.

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Arfaq Nabi and paralegal officer Sarah Thomas.

#### **Further information:**

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