

# Metal gate manufacturer fined after exposing workers to serious safety risks

A metal gate manufacturing company has been prosecuted after repeatedly ignoring Health and Safety Executive (HSE) enforcement notices.

Research and Development in Opening Gates Limited was first visited by HSE at its site in Grantham, Lincolnshire, where inspectors identified serious safety breaches, including unsafe equipment, inadequate control of welding fume, and poor structural integrity in workplace areas accessed by employees and visitors.

Three Improvement Notices were served following the initial inspection. These required the company to:

- Take effective measures to control employee and non-employee exposure to welding fume, a substance hazardous to health.
- Assess the structural safety of a mezzanine floor in use at the site.
- Ensure lifting equipment, including a forklift truck, had undergone a thorough examination to confirm it was safe to use.



Buzzsaw without guard

Further material breaches were identified in a Notification of Contravention letter, including:

- Unguarded dangerous parts of machinery.
- Inadequate edge protection on the mezzanine floor to prevent falls from height.
- Electrical systems not constructed to prevent, so far as reasonably practicable, danger.
- Unsafe storage of flammable gases.

- No competent person appointed to assist with health and safety management.



Unsafe storage of flammable gas

Despite this enforcement, follow-up inspections revealed continued non-compliance. HSE returned to the site five more times, serving three additional Improvement Notices and one Prohibition Notice.

The Prohibition Notice was issued during a second visit in relation to ducting installed above welding benches. The ducting was supported by unstable and unsecured structures that were visibly bowing, posing a serious risk of personal injury should it collapse. The installation had been intended to control exposure to welding fume but was found to be unsafe and ineffective.

Two further Notification of Contravention letters were also sent to the company. During the intervention, compliance deadlines were extended on two occasions, but legal requirements were still not met. The company's failings put employees, contractors and visitors at risk of serious harm. Reasonably practicable measures could have been taken to control these risks, but the company failed to do so.

An investigation by HSE found that Research and Development in Opening Gates Limited had failed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others affected by its work activities. The company's standard of health and safety management fell significantly below legal requirements, leading to a proactive prosecution.

[HSE guidance](#) states that employers must take effective measures to control exposure to hazardous substances such as welding fume. This typically includes providing engineering controls, like Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV). Workplaces must also be structurally sound and lifting equipment must be examined regularly by competent professionals.

Research and Development in Opening Gates Limited, of Lea Bridge Road, London pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £40,000 for each offence,

totalling £80,000, and ordered to pay £7,495.72 in costs, along with a £2,000 victim surcharge. The sentence was handed down at Lincoln Magistrates' Court on 12 June 2025.

HSE inspector Muir Finlay said:

"This prosecution follows a catalogue of failures, all of which posed serious risks to both the health and safety of workers and visitors of the site.

"The company failed to implement basic, well-understood measures to control risks. Health and safety must be effectively managed – it's not optional."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Matthew Reynolds and paralegal officer Jason Dix.

#### **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 England and Wales can be found [here](#) and for those in Scotland [here](#).
5. Link to relevant HSE guidance: [Welding fume: protect your workers – HSE](#)

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## **Taylor Wimpey fined £800,000 after teen apprentice injured on site**

A housebuilder has been fined £800,000 after a teen apprentice was injured when a temporary stairwell covering collapsed.

Charlie Marsh, 17, had been working as a contractor on a Taylor Wimpey UK Limited site as it built around 450 new homes on its Meadfields site in Weston-Super-Mare.

The apprentice bricklayer, from Whitchurch in Bristol, was less than 12 months into his career when the incident happened. An investigator for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) said the teen was lucky to escape serious injury.



The collapsed stairwell after the incident

On 22 August 2023 Charlie had been loading concrete blocks onto the temporary flooring on the first floor of one of the newly built homes. The blocks were being loaded into stacks of between 10 and 20, one of which was on or near to a temporary stairwell covering. This was a large area covered with a timber sheet material laid over joists – both of which would be later removed to install the staircase.

However, the area collapsed, causing Charlie and around 20kg of the concrete blocks to fall more than two metres to the ground below. He sustained injuries to his fingers, hand, wrist and shoulder.

The subsequent HSE investigation found that the joists under the timber sheet material should have been back propped. This was mentioned a number of times in Taylor Wimpey's own health and safety manual for the site, however, it had been missed on this particular plot. Had suitably designed back propping been used, it is unlikely the incident would have occurred.

- [HSE guidance \(L153 – Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations 2015\)](#) states that all practicable steps must be taken to prevent danger to any person from structural collapses and that an employer has a duty to ensure that contractors under their control should not be exposed to risks of their health or safety (Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974).

Taylor Wimpey UK Limited pleaded guilty to breaching section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £800,000 and ordered to pay £6,240.25 costs with a £2000 victim surcharge at the North Somerset Magistrates' Court on 3 June 2025.



Charlie Marsh, who was 17 at the time, fell through the stairwell with between 10 and 20 concrete blocks

HSE inspector Derek McLauchlan said "Everyone working in construction has a responsibility to ensure people are safe."

"Any work involving structural stability is potentially high risk and proper planning and implementation should be given."

"This incident could have been avoided had the right steps been taken."

"The failures of Taylor Wimpey resulted in a young man at the very beginning of his career being injured. Charlie was lucky those injuries were not far more serious."

"Lessons should be learned."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Samantha Tiger and Paralegal Officer Rebecca Withell.

#### **Further information:**

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# Edinburgh Airport fined after pensioner fell from ambulift

- James Young died in hospital more than a week after the fall
- Locking fault on “ambulift” had been in place for some time before incident
- HSE guidance is available on the maintenance of work equipment.

The owner of Edinburgh Airport has been fined £80,000 after a pensioner fell from an ambulift on his return from holiday.

Following the fall, James Young was admitted to hospital, but died more than a week later from his injuries .

The 81-year-old had just landed at the airport after holidaying on the Greek island of Rhodes with his wife Anne, when the incident happened on 28 November 2023.



The Ambulift used by Mr Young and his wife

Mr Young and his wife, who has mobility issues, had been waiting for one of the airport's ambulifts to assist them disembarking the aircraft shortly after 4pm. The couple had been two of six people requiring the assistance of the ambulift following the flight.

Ambulifts are a specially designed vehicle to assist passengers with reduced mobility. Edinburgh airport has several such vehicles which are owned, maintained and operated by the airport and driven by its employees.

Passengers who cannot embark or disembark using the aircraft steps can use an ambulift cabin, which is capable of being elevated to the level of the aircraft's door and lowered to the chassis of the vehicle. At the rear of the vehicle, a tail lift platform is then deployed to the same level as the floor level of the passenger compartment.



The locking mechanism on the safety rail was misaligned

Passengers then exit the compartment onto the tail lift, which unlike the compartment, is not enclosed, but has safety side rails and a rear gate around its perimeter. Once secure on the tail lift, it is lowered to ground level, allowing its users to move on to the tarmac step free.

Mr Young attempted to pass a piece of hand luggage to a worker on the ground whilst the tail lift had not yet been lowered. It is believed he leant against the safety rail, which swung open causing him to fall approximately five feet to the ground below.

He was assisted to his feet and helped into a wheelchair and although he wasn't thought to have sustained serious injury at time, he was taken to hospital. When examined at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, it was found Mr Young had sustained serious injuries and he subsequently died on 7 December as a result of these injuries.

As a result of the incident, Edinburgh Airport Limited submitted a [RIDDOR](#) to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and an investigation was carried out. That found that when it was raised from the ground, the locking mechanism on the tail lift's safety rail was misaligned, meaning it could potentially open outwards if pressure was applied to it. When the safety rail moved outwards from the lifting platform an open edge was created and it was through this that Mr Young fell.



The ambulift that was used on the day in question

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 require every employer to ensure that work equipment is maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair. Equipment must be maintained

so that its performance does not deteriorate to the extent that people are put at risk. [HSE guidance](#) is available on the maintenance of work equipment.

Edinburgh Airport Limited pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 5(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and Section 33(1)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £80,000 at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on 10 June 2025.

HSE inspector Jurate Gruzaite, said: “Edinburgh Airport Limited had a duty to ensure all of its work equipment was maintained in an efficient state and in working order. The company failed in this duty and had a role in a family tragedy that unfolded the moment Mr and Mrs Young returned from holiday.

“It is clear that the fault on the ambulift had been in place before Mr Young fell from the platform.

“We can only hope this tragic incident is one the industry can learn from.”

#### **Further information:**

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## **Health and safety regulator reminds farmers to keep visitors safe and healthy at open farm events**

Ahead of [Open Farm Sunday](#) (Sunday 8 June) the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is highlighting guidance available to farmers to help them keep people safe.

As we enter the summer months, an increasing number of working farms are taking the opportunity to hold open farm events and allow members of the public to visit their farms.

Open farm events can benefit both visitors and farmers alike, but it is crucial that farmers understand the health and safety measures they should take to keep visitors safe and well.

HSE inspector Wayne Owen said: “Open farm events provide a great opportunity for the public to learn more about farming, but it must be done safely.

“Farmers choosing to hold open farm events should make sure that they comply with health and safety legislation. It is extremely important that farmers understand the risks on their farm and ensure that visitors are protected from them.

“Farms should ensure that safety risks when offering activities like trailer rides are controlled. Our guidance can help: [Carrying passengers on farm trailers AIS36](#). However, there are also health risks from contact with the animals that also need attention and must be controlled.

“The Access to Farms industry group has produced an [Industry Code of Practice](#) (ICOP) which is available to download free from their website. Farmers should read and follow the guidance so that visitors remain safe and well on their farms. The ICOP includes a useful checklist for farmers to use.”

Key components of a well-managed open farm event include:

- Making sure the event is risk assessed and well planned.
- Ensuring that the farm and farm staff understand the risks on site, including zoonotic risk (i.e. risks from diseases or bugs carried by animals).
- Providing visitors with enough information on the risks and the controls in place (e.g. the importance of properly washing hands after touching animals, immediately before eating or drinking, and before leaving site).
- Controlling visitor access to animals.
- Supervising visitor contact with animals. Providing separate clean areas for petting of animals. Preventing visitors going into the pens with animals.
- Providing suitable facilities for washing hands (normally this will be hot and cold water, liquid soap and paper towels) and directing visitors to use them after petting animals, immediately before eating food, before and after using any play equipment, and before leaving site. Hand washing gels are not an acceptable substitute for washing facilities.
- If visitors are allowed to consume food or drink on site, providing separate clean eating areas, near hand washing facilities.
- Good prominent signage on site giving important information to visitors (but don’t rely on signage alone to give those important messages).
- Ensuring that visitors are not exposed to other risks on the farm e.g. by fencing off high risk areas or activities and keeping people away from traffic routes and moving vehicles.

By following these principles farms can hold safe and enjoyable open farm events.

## **Further information:**

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. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#)is available.
3. HSE was consulted in the production of the ICOP. It provides sensible, proportionate and balanced advice to farms on how to comply with health and safety law and keep visitors safe and well.

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## **Cheshire college fined after student's fingers severed**

A college in Nantwich that specialises in outdoor-based careers has been fined £40,000 after a student's fingers were severed when his hand came into contact with a mitre saw.

Aaron Maguire, from Crewe, was a second year Horticulture student at Reaseheath College when his hand came into contact with the blade of the saw on 20 September 2023. He had been using the saw to cut a piece of wood along its length when the wood twisted and pulled his hand into the cutting disc of the saw.

This resulted in the then 17-year old cutting through several fingers and the thumb on his left hand. Following an eight hour operation, surgeons managed to successfully re-attach Aaron's thumb and index finger, but the middle finger could not be saved.

Keen hockey player Aaron, who is now 19, said everyday tasks were now more difficult.

"Although my left hand is not my dominant hand, I have had to adjust to doing things that I would normally do with my left hand, such as cutting food and picking up everyday objects like glasses and cups," he said.

"I cannot grip things properly and it makes it difficult to do the hobbies I did.

"Prior to the incident, I was a keen hockey player. I still try to play hockey now, but it is nowhere near the level I was playing at before I had my injury."



Aaron Maguire was just 17 when the incident happened

More than 18 months on, Aaron has been told that he requires further surgery to his middle finger, which he hopes won't affect his plans to go to university in September.

"There are a number of reasons why an operation needs to take place.

"One of them is because the bone in my index finger is gradually sliding down and pushing into the skin on my hand.

"The operation is due to take place later this year. If the timing of the operation occurs around September when I am due to start my university course, this will have a significant impact on my studies."

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the college failed to adequately risk assess or produce a written safe system of work for using the mitre saw. The college did not record what training and instruction was given to students on the use of the saw.

There was no process to determine whether supervision was needed, nor was there any refresher training for using the saw following the students' return from their summer break.

On the day of the incident, Aaron had been seen by the tutor earlier that morning using the saw improperly. Despite this, he was allowed to use the saw again later that day without supervision.

HSE guidance states that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment should be carried out to identify measures that can be taken to overcome the risks that the hazard presents. It also states that young people warrant special consideration due to their judgement and lack of experience.

Employers need to satisfy themselves that in addition to being adequately trained, users can demonstrate competence, and the level of supervision should be directly related to the level of competence. (Further guidance can be found here: [Safe use of woodworking machinery. Provision and Use of Work](#)

[Equipment Regulations 1998 as applied to woodworking machinery. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L114](#).

Reaseheath College in Nantwich, pleaded guilty to Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The college was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay £6,106 in costs at Chester Magistrates' Court on 4 June 2025.

HSE inspector Summer Foster said: "Places of education and workplaces must ensure that they have properly assessed the risks where young people are using dangerous machinery.

"If suitable training, an assessment of competence and appropriate supervision had been carried out then this accident would not have been able to happen.

"A young man has been left with life-changing injuries as a result."

The HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Edward Parton and paralegal officer Jason Dix.

**Further information:**

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