

# Manufacturing firms reminded of their asbestos duties

Britain's workplace regulator is reminding manufacturing firms of their asbestos duties.

As we approach Global Asbestos Awareness Week (April 1 – 7), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is reminding those running businesses occupying buildings built before 2000 to properly assess, manage and monitor asbestos risks in line with the law.

Older manufacturing facilities may house multiple asbestos containing materials (ACMs). Asbestos was widely used in buildings and in some equipment between 1950 and 1980; however, any building built or refurbished before 2000 could contain an ACM.

Asbestos can be found in: pipe lagging, insulation board, asbestos cement products such as profiled roof sheets and wall panels, floor coverings and asbestos sprayed coatings. ACMs such as gaskets and rope seals can also be found within old plant and equipment such as industrial ovens and pipework.

Asbestos exposures caused by poor planning and risk management can have substantial human costs for victims and their families. Asbestos-related diseases remain the highest cause of work-related deaths in Great Britain, these often fatal diseases, typically take decades for symptoms to occur following exposure.

There is a [legal duty to manage asbestos](#) and failing to do so can result in penalties ranging from fines to prison sentences. The implications of an asbestos incident can also be far reaching in terms of reputation, staff morale, attracting new staff and overall costs.

HSE data reveals there have been more than 100 asbestos-related prosecution cases brought in the past five years, relating to 150 breaches of the law.

Make UK, supporting the manufacturing sector and businesses around the country is supporting HSE's call. Chris Newson CFIOSH, Environment Health and Safety Director, said he was happy Make UK was fully behind the HSE's "[Asbestos – Your Duty](#)" campaign.

"The number of people affected each year by this deadly material within UK manufacturing is still far higher than it need be," he said.

"It is important that all dutyholders within our sector are aware of their duties and the excellent resources made freely available by HSE to help them meet their legal requirements."

The risks associated with asbestos-containing materials are well known and free advice and resources are available from the [HSE's website](#).

As the regulator's campaign continues, HSE Head of Manufacturing Sector, David Butter reminded those responsible that asbestos wasn't just a problem of the past.

"It can still be found in a wide variety of materials in factories and manufacturing premises," they said.

"Dutyholders must identify, assess and manage asbestos in their buildings to keep people safe."

There are six steps for how those responsible can comply with their legal duty:

1. Find out if asbestos could be present in your building.
1. Arrange an asbestos survey by a competent person or accredited surveyor.
1. Make a register and assess the risks from your asbestos.
1. Write your asbestos management plan.
1. Put your plan into action.
1. Continually monitor and communicate the plan.

David went on to say: "Employers should not undertake any work with asbestos materials, which exposes their employees, unless the risks have been assessed and appropriate control measures have been implemented.

"Some types of work associated with asbestos materials may only be undertaken by a suitably licensed asbestos contractor under stringent procedures.

"As well as being a legal duty, it is simply common sense and good business to ensure rigorous managing and monitoring of asbestos."

#### **Further information:**

For further information on asbestos-related disease statistics visit: [Asbestosis, mesothelioma, asbestos related lung cancer and non-malignant pleural disease in Great Britain 2024](#)

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## **Hydraulics company fined after worker's legs trapped in machine**

A hydraulics company, with locations throughout the UK, has been fined after

an employee became trapped in a machine that he was working on at a customer's premises in Plymouth.

David Lawrence, a 63-year-old engineer, was undertaking fault finding on a laser cutting machine for Pearson Hydraulics Ltd, on 26 July 2023, when the cutting bed of the machine dropped and trapped both of his legs. After spending five weeks in hospital, Mr Lawrence had to have his right leg amputated above the knee. Despite extensive surgery to save his left leg, Mr Lawrence faces the possibility of having it amputated in the future.



David Lawrence suffered life-changing injuries when the machinery trapped both of his legs

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Pearson Hydraulics Ltd did not have a safe system of work in place for maintenance activities carried out by its engineers at its customer's premises. It failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the work to be undertaken by Mr Lawrence and there had been a total failure to monitor and supervise his work. The investigation also identified that Mr Lawrence had not been adequately trained by his employer and that his knowledge of hydraulic systems on laser cutting machinery was inadequate, preventing him from carrying out the work safely.

HSE guidance stresses that it is important these situations are properly assessed. Workers carrying out maintenance activities may need to undertake significant regular risk assessment (as the situation may develop and change in ways that could not be foreseen at the outset. Further information can be found [here](#).

Pearson Hydraulics Ltd of Electric Avenue, Witham St Hughes, Lincoln pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £96,333 and ordered to pay £10,701 in costs at Plymouth Magistrates' Court on 13 March 2025.

HSE inspector Emma O'Hara said "This incident could so easily have been avoided with the correct risk assessment and implementation of a safe working procedure. Pearson Hydraulics Ltd left its employees to work out their own methods of completing fault finding and maintenance tasks, instead of providing them with suitable training and supervision so it could be done safely every time."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Andrew Siddall and paralegal officer Imogen Isaac with counsel Alan Fuller.

**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. HSE guidance about [maintaining machinery](#) is available.
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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## [The UK Chemicals Helpline is changing](#)

The UK Chemicals Contact Centre was established to support businesses and stakeholders with general enquiries relating the EU Exit Transition Period.

On 31 March 2025 the telephone services for the Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR), Prior Informed Consent Regulation (PIC) and Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulation (CLP) will be closing.

HSE can still be contacted with any queries regarding [BPR](#), [PIC](#), or [CLP](#) after this date, the relevant webpage for each regime contains more information on how to contact the appropriate helpdesk service.

If you need technical advice on other health and safety issues or if you want to report a concern about workplace health and safety conditions, please see the main [contact page](#).

The UK Chemicals Helpline service, available on 0330 159 1985, will continue for UK REACH enquiries.

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# Company fined for unsafe scaffolding

Workers scrambled up the rungs of an unsafe scaffold to work at a block of flats in Merseyside.

The company in question, A.I.M Access Solutions Ltd has been fined £30,000 for its failure to assemble safe scaffolding following an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

In May 2021, the workplace regulator identified serious issues with the construction of the scaffold and the assembly instructions had not been followed while the scaffold tower was being built on Rice Hey Road. No ladder was used access the scaffold. Instead, workers climbed the rungs of the scaffold itself as opposed to a proprietary ladder.

HSE has well established [guidance](#) on tower scaffolds. Many people are injured each year when they fall from towers or when the tower overturns. The incidents that occur are mainly caused by:

- Defects in the erected scaffold – where the tower structure is incorrectly assembled or where a platform guardrail is missing.
- Erection and dismantling – The manufacturer, supplier or hirer has a duty to provide an instruction manual explaining the erection sequence, including any bracing requirements and the height to which the tower can be erected safely. This information must be passed on to the person erecting the tower.

The HSE investigation was prompted after the regulator was notified of the death of A.I.M Access Solutions Ltd employee Robert Duffy.

The 45-year-old passed away in hospital on 23 May 2021, three days after sustaining serious injuries while working at the site on Rice Hey Road.

The prosecution of A.I.M Access Solutions Ltd, of Manorside Gores Road, Knowsley Industrial Park, Kirkby, was not brought on the grounds that the incident was causative of Mr Duffy's death.

The firm pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. It was fined £30,800 and ordered to pay £5,040.75 in costs at Wirral Magistrates' Court on 27 February 2025.

HSE inspector Sam Eves said: "A.I.M Access Solutions Ltd did not ensure the tower scaffold was constructed correctly. The company failed to provide a safe way to get to and from the work platform, for example using an appropriately designed internal ladder.

"Companies should follow HSE guidance to ensure they effectively plan, manage and monitor similar construction work and reduce the risks to their employees."

This prosecution was brought by HSE senior enforcement lawyer Daniel Poole

and supported by HSE paralegal officer Helen Hugo.

**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](#).

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## **Bradford builder sentenced after fatal fall of asylum seeker**

A self-employed builder has been handed a suspended prison sentence following the death of an asylum seeker who fell from scaffolding at a domestic property in Bradford.

Sarabjit Singh, 44, was sentenced to six months imprisonment, suspended for 12 months, and ordered to complete 100 hours of unpaid work.

Mr Eraj Rahanpour, a 29-year-old originally from Iran, died after falling from height during rendering works on 25 August 2021. Mr Rahanpour had been collected by Sarabjit Singh that morning from a road in Bradford popular with people looking for casual, cash-in-hand work.

Mr Singh dropped Mr Rahanpour off at the site where he was to be paid £50 for six hours of labour, mixing products applied to the wall by two other

workers.

During the afternoon, Mr Rahanpour fell from the top level of a scaffold onto the driveway below, suffering serious injuries. He was taken to Leeds General Infirmary where he was placed into a medically induced coma. A decision was later made to remove life support, and Mr Rahanpour died on 8 September 2021.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found Mr Singh had provided domestic-type ladders for the works that were not secured sufficiently and did not provide safe access to the scaffold platform. The ladders had numerous defects, while safety gates provided with the scaffold had been tied back, creating an opening through which persons could fall.

Mr Singh had also failed to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment or produce a method statement for the work. He could not demonstrate effective supervision or evidence of formal training for any of the workers involved in the project.

HSE guidance states employers and those in control of any work at height activity must make sure work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people. This includes using the right type of equipment for working at height. Further guidance can be found at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm>

Mr Sarabjit Singh, of Glenlee Road, Bradford, was found guilty of breaching Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 at Leeds Magistrates' Court on 5 March 2025. The judge ordered no costs.

Paul Thompson, a Principal Inspector at HSE said: "This is an extremely tragic case where a vulnerable person seeking an opportunity to work sadly didn't make it home that evening.

Mr Rahanpour's nearest family member resides in Canada, making this case all the more unfortunate.

"We are able to provide a voice for Mr Rahanpour to ensure failures by Mr Singh have been held to account.

"Those putting people to work need to fully assess and control the risks from working at height, and ensure suitable training, guidance and supervision. Equipment used for work should be suitable for the purpose intended and in an efficient state of repair."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Iain Jordan.

#### **Further information:**

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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 on working at height can be found here <https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm>
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](#).