

# Construction company fined after worker seriously injured in fall from height in handbag factory renovation

- Worker suffered multiple serious injuries after falling from ladder during refurbishment project.
- HSE investigation found there was no safe system of work for working at height.
- Company had previously been served with a Prohibition Notice for unsafe work at height.

A construction company has been fined after a worker sustained serious injuries when he fell from a ladder during renovation works in London.

On 5 August 2021, the worker was engaged on a refurbishment project in Islington for Bow Tie Construction Limited. The project involved converting an existing domestic property and a former handbag factory into a single dwelling.

As part of the works, a new concrete staircase was to be installed between the ground and first floors. Temporary timber formwork was required to construct the staircase.

The worker, along with two others, had been instructed by company director and acting site manager Rafael Delimata to build the formwork. While standing on the top of a stepladder and using a gas-powered nail gun, the worker fell approximately 1.65 metres to the floor below.

He sustained multiple serious injuries, including crush injuries to both elbows requiring several surgeries, a fractured forearm, dislocated wrists, and injuries to his right leg and left knee.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Bow Tie Construction Limited had failed to implement a safe system of work for working at height during the construction of the staircase.

The investigation also identified wider failings in the management of work at height on site, including inadequate edge protection, incorrectly assembled tower scaffolds, staircases without edge protection, and uncontrolled use of ladders. These failings continued despite a previous HSE visit on 2 July 2021, during which a Prohibition Notice had been served for unsafe work at height.



Photo from the scene

Working at height remains one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death. HSE has detailed guidance on how to plan and carry out work at height safely, including the importance of selecting appropriate equipment and ensuring suitable supervision. These can be found on our website: [Construction – Work at height – HSE](#).

Bow Tie Construction Limited, of Cliveden Office Village, Lancaster Road, High Wycombe, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £24,000 and ordered to pay £4,101 in costs at Southwark Crown Court on 13 February 2026.

**HSE Inspector Emma Bitz said:**

“The risks associated with working at height are well known, and this incident could have easily been prevented.

“Employers must ensure suitable control measures are in place, safe working practices are followed, and workers are provided with appropriate supervision.

“Failure to do so can result in life-changing injuries, as this case clearly demonstrates.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Rebecca Schwartz and paralegal officer Melissa Wardle.

**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 [Construction – Work at height – 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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## [Man handed suspended sentence after illegal boiler replacement risks carbon monoxide leak](#)

- Poor work carried out deemed ‘immediately dangerous’ and put lives at risk
- Illegal boiler replacement could have resulted in carbon monoxide poisoning.
- All gas work must be carried out by registered person.

A man has been given a suspended prison sentence after he carried out dangerous and illegal gas work on a property in Bournemouth which could have resulted in carbon monoxide poisoning.

David McCallum, 58, trading as McCallum Plumbing & Heating, attended a property in the Dorset town in February 2023. Part of the work carried out saw McCallum relocating a gas boiler and flue. However, following its installation, the homeowners noticed problems with it and had concerns over the standard of the work that had been done.



Part of the work carried out saw McCallum relocating a gas boiler and flue

They arranged for another gas engineer to check the installation. When they arrived, they carried out an inspection and deemed the boiler to be 'immediately dangerous'. The gas boiler flue was not sealed or correctly positioned which meant that there was a risk of carbon monoxide leaking into the property.

The matter was reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and an investigation found that McCallum had no training in gas work and was not registered with the Gas Safe Register (GSR).

Carrying out gas work without registration is illegal and potentially dangerous, as unqualified work can lead to gas leaks, fires, explosions, and carbon monoxide poisoning.

McCallum knew he should have been registered with GSR to undertake the gas work, as he had previously been a director of a company that had been registered.



The gas boiler flue was not sealed or correctly positioned

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 require those undertaking gas work to be Gas Safe registered and to hold the relevant qualifications to demonstrate their competence.

Members of the public are reminded that all gas work must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Anyone can check whether an engineer is registered by visiting [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk) or calling 0800 408 5500.

David McCallum of Balston Road, Parkstone, Poole, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 3(3), 27(1) and 27(5) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was sentenced to 10 months imprisonment, suspended for 12 months. He was also ordered to pay the homeowner compensation of £3,907 and £7,064 in costs at Bristol Magistrates' Court on 13 February 2026.

In addition to this, McCallum was given a six-month electronic monitoring order restricting his movements over the weekends.

**HSE inspector Simon Jones said:** “David McCallum undertook gas work which he knew he was not registered to do – and his shoddy work replacing the boiler and flue meant there was an immediate danger of carbon monoxide leaking into the property.

“McCallum’s illegal gas work put the lives of innocent homeowners at risk for his own financial gain.

“All gas work must be conducted by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life. Installers will be prosecuted if they carry out gas work without the proper qualifications.

“I advise all householders to check that anyone they allow to work on the gas supply is gas safe registered. This can be done in just seconds.”

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Julian White, HSE advocate, Rowena Goodwin and Paralegal Farhat Basir.

#### **Further information:**

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1. Guidance is available: The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. Relevant guidance can be found at [Gas Safety \(Installation and Use\) Regulations 1998 \(GSIUR\) as amended. Approved Code of Practice and guidance – HSE](#)

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## **[Chemical company fined after agency worker suffers chemical burns](#)**

– Flowchem UK Ltd fined £50,000 after worker suffered chemical burns from corrosive drain un-blocker

– HSE found inadequate training, PPE not routinely worn, and insufficient

first aid provisions

– HSE guidance is available

A manufacturer of household cleaning products in Nottingham has been fined after an agency worker suffered burns to her face, eye, neck and arm when she was doused in a corrosive sink and drain un-blocker.

Marzanna Sokolowska was working for Flowchem UK Ltd at its manufacturing site in Nottingham on 2nd November 2023 when she was doused with a significant quantity of corrosive liquid after accidentally opening the wrong valve on a 1,000 litre container.

Ms Sokolowska was working in a team decanting sink and drain un-blocker liquid from bulk containers at shoulder height into smaller containers for sale.

Ms Sokoloska accidentally opened the outlet valve on an adjacent container to the one fitted with a decanting hose, which had no end cap fitted. The liquid sprayed out under considerable force splashing her in the face and upper body.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the system of work employed by Flowchem exposed their employees and agency workers to health and safety risks in the event of leaks or losses of containment.

Training arrangements, including the provision of adequate information to workers with limited understanding of English was inadequate. Whilst some personal protective equipment (PPE) was provided by the company, it was routinely not worn, and there was inadequate supervision or monitoring to ensure the use of PPE.

Whilst eye-wash bottles were provided, the first aid arrangements available did not take account of the potential scale of any exposure, including the lack of a shower for example.

HSE guidance on the [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations \(COSHH\)](#) states that employers should identify the risks arising from the use of substances hazardous to health and put in place effective measures to prevent exposure and mitigate the consequences of any such exposure. These measures should include consideration of the systems of work under which the dangerous substances are handled, the training and supervision of those engaged in the work and the provision of adequate PPE and first aid arrangements.

Flowchem UK Ltd of Mark Street, Sandiacre, Nottingham NG10 5AD pleaded guilty to breaches of Section 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £7,247.40 in costs with a victim surcharge of £2000 at Nottingham Magistrates Court on 12 February 2026.

**HSE Inspector, Angus Robbins, said:** “The systems of work employed by Flowchem

unnecessarily exposed workers to risks of injury from exposure to corrosive chemicals. More suitable working methods, including avoidance of decanting large volumes stored at or above head height could have been employed. Following the incident, Flowchem changed their working methods to eliminate these risks.

“Ms Sokolowska suffered very painful injuries and was unable to work for a considerable period. Of particular concern were the burns to her eyelid and eye. Fortunately, she has made a reasonable recovery and been able to return to work.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Andrew Siddall and paralegal officer, Farhat Basir.

### 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 can be found here [COSHH basics: overview – COSHH](#)
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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## [Two firms fined after racking collapse killed two workers](#)

- Two men killed following an incident at an industrial estate near Bradford.
- Lee Horton, 58 from Ilkley and Daron Pickstock, 43 from Chorley died.
- HSE investigation found serious failures in risk assessment and safe systems of work.

Two companies have been fined following an incident which resulted in the deaths of two workers in West Yorkshire.

Lee Horton, 58, and Daron Pickstock, 43, were killed when an industrial racking system collapsed as it was being tested at Castefields Industrial Estate in Bingley on 29 October 2020.

The racking was being tested at a site belonging to Space Productiv Ltd, of which Mr Horton, from Ilkley, was the managing director. Mr Pickstock, who was from Chorley, was self-employed and working for a company called Collins Site Services.

The racking system was being loaded with test weights, some of which weighed up to two tonnes, when the structure began to collapse. The two men had been working from a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) next to the racking structure as it was being loaded.

However, as the structure collapsed, it struck the MEWP, causing it to overturn while both men were inside. Mr Horton and Mr Pickstock sustained fatal injuries and died shortly afterwards.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that both companies failed to adequately assess the risks arising from the work being undertaken and failed to put in place a safe system of work to ensure the health and safety of those involved.

HSE found that the planned and implemented systems of work were unsafe. Workers were positioned within the collapse zone of the racking during testing, placing them at serious risk should the structure fail.

Space Productiv Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined **£97,500** and ordered to pay **£17,377** in costs at Leeds Crown Court on 11 February 2026.

Collins Site Services Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined **£60,000** and ordered to pay **£10,292** in costs at Leeds Crown Court on 11 February 2026.

### **Family tributes**



Lee Horton

Emma Horton, daughter of Lee Horton, said:

“Lee was more than just a father to Josh and I; he was our best friend, therapist, career advisor and confidant. We feel incredibly fortunate to have had such a special and unique bond with him, but that only makes the void he’s left behind feel all the more immense.

“There are no words that can fully capture the magnitude of our loss.

“His humour, warmth and generosity are deeply missed by all who knew him.”



Daron Pickstock

Jack Stileman, son of Daron Pickstock, said:

“My dad was a hard worker and content in his life. He didn’t like unnecessary drama or unkindness, and he was grateful for what he had.

“My future children do not get the chance to have a grandfather. I feel heartbroken for them that the circumstances surrounding my dad’s death happened at work and could very possibly have been avoided.

“My dad liked the best quality of things. He taught me how to fix things and adapt things to make them work. He was constantly mending something, and I miss that guidance on what I could do better when we spent time together.

“We shared a love of music and the benefits it can have in your life. We talked openly about life and now that’s gone. No one can replace my dad.”

**HSE Inspector Mark Slater said:**

“All work activities where there is a risk to health and safety should be properly planned and risk assessed, and safe systems of work must be followed.

“Where risks cannot be eliminated, it is vital that workers are kept out of danger zones to reduce the risk of serious injury or death.

“In this case, inadequate planning and unsafe systems of work exposed workers to an unacceptable level of risk. This was a wholly avoidable incident.”

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Daniel Poole and paralegal officer Sarah Zara Salman.

## Notes to editors

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4. Relevant guidance can be found here [Managing for health and safety](#)
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## [Machine manufacturer fined £10,000 after lathe incident leaves employee with finger amputated](#)

- Employee lost finger when glove caught in metalworking lathe while using emery cloth
- Company failed to assess risks and ensure safe system of work
- HSE guidance states emery cloth should never be applied directly by hand

A machine manufacturing company in Middleton has been fined after an employee lost their finger and required amputation when it became caught in emery cloth used on a metal-working lathe.

On 26 April 2024, an employee was using emery cloth to polish metal work pieces when his glove was drawn into the lathe he was operating.

Following the incident, the employee had a finger on his right hand amputated. He was unable to return to his profession as a turner and was made redundant from Carter Brothers in January 2025.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Carter Brothers failed to adequately assess the risk to employees undertaking polishing of work pieces using emery cloths and failed to ensure a safe system of work.

HSE provides guidance [using emery cloth on metalworking lathes](#) . Guidance states that emery cloth should never be applied directly by hand to work rotating in a lathe. Acceptable methods include using the tool post as a clamp or a dedicated holding device, both of which reduce the risk of injury.

Carter Brothers International Limited, of Unit 30 Finlan Road, Stakehill Industrial Estate, Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £3,758.55 in costs with a victim surcharge of £2000 at Manchester Magistrates' Court on 9 February 2026.

**HSE Inspector Leanne Ratcliffe said:**

“This incident not only left the employee with a life-altering injury, but also meant they could not continue working in their chosen profession.

“The risks associated with using emery cloth on metalworking lathes are widely known. The company should have introduced measures to carry out polishing safely and today’s fine reflects their failure to properly follow health and safety guidance

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski and paralegal officer Benjamin Stobbart.

**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](#) are available.
4. Relevant guidance can be found here [Using emery cloth on metalworking lathes](#) and [EIS2: The use of emery cloth on metalworking lathes](#)
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](#).