

HSE issues urgent offshore gangway safety notice

- Power failures and control errors cause gangways to retract without warning, risking fatal falls
- Oil and gas operators to review gangway systems or stop operations
- Safety measures required before workers can safely use motion compensated gangways

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has issued a [safety notice](#) today (8 August) to highlight the risks of potentially fatal gangway accidents to offshore workers.

Serious risks have been identified where motion compensated gangways retract without warning due to power failures or control system errors. This puts workers at risk of falling from height, being struck by moving parts, or suffering serious injuries including death.

HSE is calling on operators in oil and gas, and renewable energy sectors to review their gangway arrangements. Any gangways that cannot provide sufficient warning before automatic retraction must be taken out of service until proper safety controls are installed.

Howard Harte, Operations Manager (Offshore Regulation) at the Health and Safety Executive, said: “Despite a previous safety alert in 2024, and the publication of industry good practice, we have become aware that gangways that provide insufficient warning before auto-retraction are still being used in the offshore oil and gas and renewables industry.

“This safety notice addresses continuing incidents where gangway failures have resulted in unexpected retraction without adequate warning to operators or personnel crossing between platforms. Workers have been left unable to move to safety or brace for sudden movement when systems fail.”

Under the requirements, dutyholders must conduct technical risk assessments of all automatic gangway functions. Control systems must only allow auto-retraction when personnel are confirmed safe. The use of gangway operators to manually override automatic retractions requires rigorous risk assessment.

The HSE emphasises that adequate warning systems must provide advance notice before dangerous events occur.

Howard added: “A warning by definition is advanced notice that a potentially dangerous event is about to occur. The purpose of the warning is to enable persons to make themselves safe before the event occurs. Audible and/or visual alarms that are triggered at the same time the gangway retracts are not considered to provide adequate warning to enable workers to reach safety.”

Dutyholders must review their gangway design, including the testing that has

been carried out of all automatic functions. They should carry out a suitable and sufficient technical risk assessment to understand all operational states of the control system under which the gangway may auto-retract, including that the control system will only result in auto-retraction if personnel are not at risk. Use of gangway operators to override auto-retractions should be rigorously risk assessed.

The safety notice can be viewed at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/safetybulletins/motion-compensated-gangways-auto-retraction.htm>

Further guidance on offshore health and safety law, risk assessment and equipment safety is available on the HSE website:

- [Offshore health and safety law](#)
- [Managing risks and risk assessment at work](#)
- [Equipment and machinery safety](#)

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. HSE issued a previous safety notice relating to the risk of serious injury from motion compensated gangways in 2024 – [HSE Safety Notice ED02-2024 Risk of serious injury from motion compensated gangways](#).
3. Relevant legal documents:
 - [The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 \(Application outside Great Britain\) Order 2013](#)
 - The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. [General duties of employers to their employees](#) and [General duties of employers and self-employed to persons other than their employees](#)
 - [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Regulation 3: Risk Assessment](#)
 - The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. Regulation 4: [Suitability of work equipment](#), Regulation 5: [Maintenance](#), Regulation 6: [Inspection](#) and Regulation 11: [Dangerous parts of machinery](#)
 - [The Work at Height Regulations 2005](#)

[Waste firm fined after worker crushed](#)

by excavator

A County Durham waste management company has been fined after a young employee was run over by an excavator.

Farm XS (Northern) Limited, based in Barnard Castle, was sentenced after an incident on 29 January 2024 that left the 24-year-old with serious injuries.

The employee was only in his second week of employment at the Staindrop Road site when he was struck from behind by an excavator and run over. He suffered fractures to both feet.



XS Farm excavators and waste pile

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had failed to ensure a safe system of work was in place. The 24-year-old was working on a waste pile near moving vehicles with no physical separation between them. There was no risk assessment or system of work to protect pedestrians from vehicle movements.

HSE guidance clearly states that pedestrians and vehicles should be segregated when waste is being manually sorted. By law, employers must ensure traffic routes can be used without risking the safety of workers nearby. Guidance is available at [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk) – [Transport movements – HSE](#)



XS Farm waste piles

The case against Farm XS (Northern) Limited, Shaw Bank, Staindrop Road, Barnard Castle, County Durham, DL12 8TD, was heard at Teesside Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 5 August 2025. The company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. It was fined £4,000 and ordered to pay £4,285 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Richard McMullen said:

"The outcome could have been much worse. But the failures that day meant a worker received serious injuries.

"This incident was easily avoidable by implementing control measures and safe practices to ensure that workers were not put at risk from moving vehicles, including clear segregation and safe refuges.

"This should be a reminder to the waste industry of the need to consider workplace transport risks and to introduce appropriate control measures to separate vehicles and pedestrians."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Iain Jordan and paralegal officer Helen Jacob.

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. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)
3. HSE news releases are available at: [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
4. Guidance for working safely with vehicles can be found at: [Workplace transport – HSE](#)

[Council fined after failures led to care home death](#)

- Man was able to leave care home undetected in early hours of morning.
- Search involved police, coastguard and firefighters.
- Doors at the home were not alarmed or protected.

A local authority has been fined after the death of a patient who went missing from a care home on the Isle of Barra.

Western Isles Council pled guilty to a charge under the Health and Safety at Work Act following the death of a 69-year-old man at St Brendan's Care Home in Castlebay.

Allan MacLeod, who had been diagnosed with Dementia, had been a resident at the home – one of five operated by the council throughout the Western Isles – for around six months at the time of his death. In the early hours of 9 March 2024, he had been able to leave his bedroom without the knowledge of staff and was only found around four hours after going missing. He died a short time later in hospital.

Mr MacLeod had been placed in the home in October 2023 to allow him to be nearer a relative who stayed on Barra. In his first month at the home, staff observed him and determined patterns in his behaviour and how they could best assist him. He was able to go on regular road trips around the island with his family.

On 8 March, having been settled in bed around 9pm, hourly checks were carried out to ensure his wellbeing, but at 2am on 9 March, his bed was unoccupied, and he could not be accounted for after a search of the home.

To avoid being observed by staff, he had exited the home via the only door that was not alarmed and was ten metres from his bedroom. Police Scotland were alerted and a search initiated.

Local Coastguard, RNLI and firefighters were called out to assist in the search and at around 6am, the Coastguard helicopter detected a heat signature near the home on the patio of a residential property.

Mr MacLeod was found with facial injuries consistent with falling. He was transferred to hospital, but despite the efforts of medical staff, he died an hour later.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) determined that he had made several previous attempts to leave the home. Any measures that staff had taken to mitigate this, by fitting an electronic tag to his clothing that indicated his whereabouts had been defeated by Mr Macleod having removed it.

A risk assessment carried out in December 2023 indicated that Mr MacLeod would remove a tag if he located it, therefore staff required to be vigilant to this behaviour. It was only after his death that the home introduced a regime of half hourly checks on residents. Arrangements had already been made to install keypad entry systems on all doors, but this work had not been completed before Mr MacLeod's death.

Western Isles Council, of Sandwick Road, Stornoway, pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 31 and Section 33(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The council was fined £80,000 at Lochmaddy Sheriff Court on 6 August 2025.

HSE inspector Ashley Fallis said: "This was a tragic and preventable death.

"The council should have made sure the home had stronger measures in place

with Mr MacLeod's risks already known and assessed.

"Although changes have since been made, they came too late to prevent his death."

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 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 Scotland can be found [here](#).

Manchester firm fined after workers exposed to asbestos risks

A Manchester-based construction company has been fined after workers were put at risk of exposure to asbestos.

A1 Property Maintenance Management Limited was acting as the principal contractor during work at the former Unicorn Public House on Liverpool Road, Eccles, Greater Manchester.



The Unicorn Pub

During a routine inspection to the site on 16th May 2022, a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector discovered that 12 square metres of asbestos insulation board (AIB) had been present in a dumb waiter lift shaft – but had already been illegally removed by unknown individuals. This led to the inspector issuing a prohibition notice stopping all work on site until an asbestos survey had been completed.

Previously, after noticing the pub door had been broken into, a site worker had entered the building, where they discovered what appeared to be asbestos debris in the area around the lift shaft. The debris was later wrapped and removed by a licensed asbestos removal contractor.

However, A1 Property Maintenance Management Limited failed to carry out a full asbestos survey to confirm that all asbestos-containing materials had been removed before allowing further construction work to take place.



Property demolition site of former pub

HSE's has two campaigns "[Asbestos and You](#)" and "[Asbestos Your Duty](#)" reminding tradespeople about the dangers of asbestos and the importance of working safely with it, also to reach those responsible for the maintenance and repair of non-domestic buildings.

The regulator also provides comprehensive guidance for workers and employers about working safely with [asbestos on its website](#). This includes information on how to identify asbestos, what to do if you find it, and the appropriate safety measures needed when working with or around asbestos-containing materials. Workers in trades such as construction, maintenance, demolition and installation are particularly at risk and should ensure they have appropriate training before starting work that might disturb asbestos.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(6) of The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. It was fined £5,360 and ordered to pay £5,117 in costs at a hearing at Tameside Magistrates' Court on 30 July 2025.

Speaking after the hearing, a HSE spokesperson said:

"This was a serious incident and put those working in the building at risk of being exposed to the harmful effects of asbestos.

"Duty holders are reminded of the need to review without delay an asbestos

assessment if there has been a significant change in the premises to which the assessment relates.”

The prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Sam Crockett and paralegal Hannah Snelling.

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5. HSE Asbestos guidance can be found here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/>

[Sole trader fined after worker suffered serious injuries](#)

- Man fell from height due to lack of edge protection.
- Second time HSE action against sole trader.
- HSE guidance on working safely at height is available.

A worker suffered serious injuries after falling from a flat roof that did not have any edge protection.

A sole trader has been fined following a prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

It was the second time Gary Smith, trading as GJ Smith Roofing, had failed to provide edge protection on a job, with HSE previously taking enforcement action against him.

Smith pleaded guilty following the incident on 15 December 2022, when a team of roofers and labourers were working on his behalf, replacing a flat roof on a house in the Luton area.



A worker suffered serious injuries after falling from a flat roof that did not have any edge protection

At around 11am, one of the workers was carrying large wooden boards across the roof, when he inadvertently stepped off the edge of the roof falling a distance of about 10 feet. He suffered a fractured vertebrae in his back and a broken ankle.

Working at height remains one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death and HSE has detailed guidance on [working safely at height](#).

The HSE investigation found the task had not been properly risk assessed and planned which meant that edge protection around the flat roof had not been put in place, despite it being reasonably practicable to do so. Following HSE intervention, edge protection was installed before work re-commenced.

Gary Smith of Watling Street, Dunstable, pleaded guilty to a breach of Regulation 4(1) of the Work At Height Regulations 2005. He was fined £2,125 and ordered to pay costs of £5,445 at a hearing at Luton & South Bedfordshire Magistrates' Court on 29 July 2025.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Tim Nicholson said: "Clearly Mr Smith hadn't learnt from his previous failures.

"Sadly, this latest offence resulted in a man being seriously injured.

"What makes this incident even more frustrating is the fact it could so easily have been avoided by properly planning the task and ensuring that suitable edge protection had been put in place prior to work starting."

This HSE prosecution was brought by enforcement lawyer Julian Ward and paralegal officer Helen Hugo.

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5. HSE guidance about [working safely on roofs](#) is available.