

# COVID spot checks and inspections continue as lifting of restrictions are delayed

The UK Government has delayed the full lifting of COVID restrictions in England by four weeks, at Step 3 of the roadmap. This comes amid rising infection rates as the new Delta COVID variant spreads.

After two weeks, the government will review the data to see if the risks have reduced. It is expected that England will move to Step 4 on 19 July.

The [Scottish](#) and [Welsh](#) Governments are reviewing their planning for the lifting of restrictions, which may also be delayed.

Businesses need to continue to have COVID-secure measures in place that are in line with the latest Government guidance. The latest [GOV.UK guidance](#) includes guidance on going to work. You should continue to work from home if you can. There is also information if you are in an area where a new [COVID-19 variant](#) is spreading

It's vital at this stage that businesses don't become complacent and continue to have measures in place to manage the risk from Coronavirus and ensure workers are following them.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is working with local authorities to carry out spot checks and inspections on businesses. These are taking place in all areas, to check that businesses have COVID-secure measures in place to keep workers, visitors and customers safe.

## **What happens during spot checks and inspections?**

HSE calls and visits businesses to check the COVID-secure measures they have in place and provides guidance and advice if required. Where businesses aren't managing the risk, action will be taken. This can range from the provision of specific advice, issuing enforcement notices and stopping certain work practices until they are made safe. Where businesses fail to comply, this could lead to prosecution.

Angela Storey, Director of Transformation and Operational Services at HSE, said: "The UK government has confirmed a four-week delay to the lifting of restrictions, as the Delta strain of Covid-19 becomes the dominant variant in England, with infection numbers rising across Britain.

"Whilst we recognise that this news will come as a disappointment to a number of businesses, especially those in the hospitality sector, businesses must continue to have measures in place to manage the risks, to help protect the health of local communities as well as to support the local and national UK economy.

“We will also continue to work with local authorities, checking that businesses have COVID-secure measures in place, and providing guidance and advice where needed.

“As we continue to carry out spot checks and inspections our support of cross-government work remains. We are committed to helping employers and employees as they work through the pandemic.

“All workplaces are in scope for spot checks which means businesses of any size, in any sector can receive an unannounced call or visit to check they are COVID-secure.”

Please ensure your workplace is safe by following the guidance on being [COVID-secure](#). Further information on [spot checks and inspections](#) is available on our website.

/Ends

#### **Notes to editor**

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. <https://www.hse.gov.uk>
2. HSE news releases are available at <https://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. For HSE’s working safely guidance see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm>

The post [COVID spot checks and inspections continue as lifting of restrictions are delayed](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

---

## **[Offshore oil company fined for hydrocarbon release](#)**

Offshore oil company Apache has been sentenced after they failed to provide written safety procedures for the depressurisation of an oil well, which led to the release of more than 1000kg of hydrocarbon gas at their Beryl Alpha production installation in the North Sea.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court heard how, on 2 June 2014, Apache had allocated a production technician to carry out a depressurisation task on one of their oil wells, which he had performed on previous occasions. However, they failed to provide him with any written safety procedures, expecting him to carry out this complex task from memory.

The Beryl Alpha rig has 40 well slots and some of its oil wells are gas-lifted to increase production efficiency. The use of gas lift means that there are large inventories of pressurised hydrocarbon gas, any uncontrolled release of these inventories is a potential major hazard event.

At approximately 19.40, four flammable gas detectors had detected gas in the area and automatically activated the platform water deluge system. The general platform alarm sounded, and all 134 workers went to their muster stations. The gas release continued, and the installation remained at muster station for more than six hours.

An investigation by HSE found that deficiencies in Apache's safety management system (SMS) lead to a release of more than 1000kg of hydrocarbon gas. They had failed to carry out a risk assessment for depressurising gas lift wells, which meant there was a lack of suitable written procedures. The use of a formalised written procedure by Apache would have ensured that this task was carried out correctly in a safe and consistent manner across all staff shifts, preventing the safety critical emergency shutdown system from being disabled during well depressurisation. The prolonged duration and magnitude of the release was a direct consequence of the inadvertent defeating of the emergency shutdown system in this instance.

Apache Beryl Limited of Caledonia House, Prime Four Business Park, Kingswells Causeway, Aberdeen pleaded guilty to breaching regulation nine of the Offshore Installations Prevention of Fire and Explosion, and Emergency Response Regulations 1995 (PFEER). They were fined £400,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE principal inspector Dave Walker said: "Although the offshore industry has managed to reduce its overall number of hydrocarbon releases, it is still the case that in most years there are several, which are of such a size that if ignited would result in potentially catastrophic consequences.

"At more than 1000kg, Apache's Beryl Alpha's hydrocarbon release was the largest reported to HSE in 2014. It occurred during complex work on a well, which used a large volume of high-pressure gas to improve production rates, the hazardous nature of which had been highlighted in specific HSE guidance.

"The depressurisation of an oil well is a safety critical task, and so should have been formalised in a written procedure to set out a specified sequence of operations to perform the task correctly and prevent potential fatal consequences."

#### **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. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

The post [Offshore oil company fined for hydrocarbon release](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

---

## [NHS Trust fined following failures to manage environmental risks](#)

Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUFT) has been fined for failing to manage environmental risks within its mental health inpatient wards. These breaches were committed by North Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (NEPUFT) before EPUFT came into existence.

Chelmsford Crown Court heard that, between 25 October 2004 and 31 March 2015, NEPUFT failed to effectively manage recognised risks from potential fixed ligature points in its inpatient wards, resulting in mental health patients being exposed to unacceptable and avoidable risk at a time when they were most vulnerable. Tragically eleven inpatients died during this timeframe whose deaths involved access to fixed ligature points.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that NEPUFT failed to adequately identify, or address with sufficient urgency, the significance of the environmental risks within its inpatient wards.

Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust of The Lodge, Lodge Approach, Runwell Wickford, Essex pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The Trust was fined £1,500,000 and ordered to pay costs of £86222.23.

“I hope this case acts as a reminder to all mental health trusts of the need to continue to review their current arrangements and ensure their service users receive the protection they need at, what is often, their most vulnerable time.”

Det Chief Insp Stephen Jennings, the Senior Investigating Officer who led the Essex Police investigation into the North Essex Partnership University Foundation Trust (NEPUFT) welcomed today's sentencing. He said: "I hope the conclusion of this HSE prosecution against NEPUFT, which we have supported throughout, now gives the families time to continue to grieve in peace.

"Following a full investigation, which began in 2017, into the circumstances of a number of deaths, and following expert legal advice, the evidential threshold was not met to allow us to take the Essex Police investigation any further. However, we ensured all of the evidence we had gathered was given to our HSE colleagues to support their investigation and it has unquestionably helped to secure this result."

## 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. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Until the 1 April 2015, decisions whether or not to investigate patient safety matters in England were made in line with our HSWA Section 3 policy: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/enforce/hswact/priorities.htm>. After this date, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) became the lead inspection and enforcement body under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 for safety and quality of treatment and care matters involving patients and service users in receipt of a health or adult social care service from a provider registered with CQC.
5. HSE has not investigated individual patient deaths. Where a patient death appears to have been possible due to access to a ligature point, HSE reviewed the suitability of the arrangements that were in place at that time to manage this risk in relation to relevant health and safety legislation.
6. The investigation timescales predate the existence of Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust which came into existence when North Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (NEPUFT) merged with another trust.

The post [NHS Trust fined following failures to manage environmental risks](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

---

# Gas installer prosecuted for illegal gas work

A gas installer has been fined after carrying out gas work whilst falsely claiming to be gas safe registered.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how, between 1 October 2018 and the 25 November 2018, Mr Paul Chappells carried out gas work at two domestic properties in Hyde and Poynton but did not hold the necessary registration to complete this work. Mr Chappells replaced a gas fire and capped off the supply at the property in Poynton and replaced a boiler at the property in Hyde. The work on the boiler was later found to be of a poor standard and was identified as "at risk" by a Gas Safe Inspector.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Mr Chappells was not registered with Gas Safe at the time the work was undertaken at both properties, despite advertising as gas safe registered on his social media account resulting in him illegally carrying out the gas work.

Mr Paul Chappells of Withington, Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 3(7), 26(1) and two counts of regulation 3(3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was sentenced to a community order of 250 hours unpaid work of eighteen months duration, fifteen rehabilitation activity days and ordered to pay costs of £1,000.

HSE inspector Lorna Sherlock said after the hearing: "Paul Chappells undertook gas work which he knew he was not registered to do. Householders should check that the engineer carrying out gas work in their home is registered with Gas Safe.

"All gas work must be done by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life."

## **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](http://hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](http://legislation.gov.uk/)
3. More information about domestic gas health and safety can be found at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/gas/htm>
4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

The post [Gas installer prosecuted for illegal gas work](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

---

## [Construction company fined after employee sustains life changing injuries in roof fall](#)

A construction company based in Chesterfield has been fined after a subcontractor hired to complete work on a roof fell from the roof joists to the concrete floor below sustaining life changing injuries.

Nottingham Magistrates' Court heard that, on 19 June 2019, Bobby Oldham Construction Limited (BOCL) were contracted to complete work on a domestic extension at Mona Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham. The work was to complete an extension to the rear of the property, which contained a skylight and wooden joists. Work had progressed to the point where roof joists were being attached. The joists were accessed using a ladder, which then led to an unprotected trestle platform. The subcontractor was sat astride one of the joists when it gave way causing him to fall. He landed on the concrete floor below sustaining serious injuries including brain trauma and a broken neck.



An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that had the company properly considered the risks associated with this type of work, and planned the work at height more carefully the incident could have been easily avoided. The trestle platforms were missing suitable edge protection, and there was an absence of other suitable fall mitigation measures such as airbags. The work was not supervised, which would have identified the unsafe working methods, which could then be challenged by the company.

Bobby Oldham Construction Limited (BOCL) of Market Street, Staveley, Chesterfield, Derbyshire pleaded guilty of breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. They were fined £8,000 and ordered to pay

costs of £3,515.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Phill Gratton said: "This was a tragic and wholly avoidable incident, caused by the failure of the host company to implement safe systems of work, and failure to ensure that work at height was properly planned and appropriately supervised.

"This risk was further amplified by the company's failure to undertake a number of simple safety measures including conducting pre-start checks on the training of workers, planning work to ensure that working methods were safe, and supervision to ensure that dangerous working methods could be observed and challenged."

#### **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](http://hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](http://legislation.gov.uk/)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

The post [Construction company fined after employee sustains life changing injuries in roof fall](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).