

# Plastics firm fined after two workers lose fingers in just ten days

- Both incidents happened during ten-day period in August 2024.
- Two workers lost fingers in different pieces of machinery.
- One of them, a grandmother, had worked at the firm for 28 years.

A company in Leeds that produces plastic products has been fined after two of its workers lost fingers in machinery in separate incidents over the course of just ten days.

Commercial Lines Limited, trading as HLN Supplies, pleaded guilty to charges brought by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) following the two unrelated incidents in August 2024 – both caused by unsafe machinery.

The HSE investigation found the company hadn't put adequate guards on machinery, meaning dangerous parts were easily accessible. The first incident happened on 12 August, when Angela Morrison, a then 61-year-old grandmother, was attempting to clear a blockage on a sanding machine. The plastics fabricator reached into a ventilation port, and her hand came in contact with a large metal rotating disk, resulting in severe damage to the fingers on her right hand.

Mrs Morrison, who has eight grandchildren, and had worked for the company for 28 years, described how she was initially in shock and could not feel any pain, but was operated on within an hour of being rushed into hospital. Doctors needed to remove what was left of her middle finger, with another finger being seriously damaged – so much so, it will also now need to be amputated.



Angela Morrison sustained serious injuries in the incident

*"They are also going to remove a portion of what is left of my middle finger to make it look better," she explained.*

*"I am naturally right-handed so everything is now much more difficult. You don't notice it until you go and do something and then you realise you can't. Little things like opening the oven or getting out change in my purse.*

*"My grandchildren were a bit afraid and squeamish of my injuries at first but they soon got used to it. There are things I can't do for them that I would like to, such as doing my granddaughter's hair.*

*"When I think about the accident, I just keep thinking 'if only it didn't happen' or if I'd done something differently. I just want to turn the clock back.*

*"I have been off work since, but my long-term hope is to get back to work, even if it's an office job."*



The sanding machine being used by Angela Morrison

Despite the wholly avoidable incident – it was only ten days later on 22 August, that another worker sustained serious injuries when his left hand came into contact with the blade of a table saw he was using to cut small strips of plastic. The 57-year-old lost part of the finger above the knuckle on his index finger and required surgery to remove the top of his middle finger several days later.

The HSE investigation found the company had failed to provide adequate guarding on the sanding machine, allowing dangerous parts to be easily accessible. Additionally, table saw training had been insufficient, and no safe work systems were in place when cutting small materials. The company also failed to have a suitable and sufficient risk assessment in place for the work being carried out.

Every year, there are a number of accidents from using work equipment, including machinery. Many are serious and some are fatal. HSE offers detailed guidance on work equipment and machinery – [Work equipment and machinery – HSE](#).

Commercial Lines Limited (T/A HLN Supplies), of Upper Accommodation Road,

Leeds, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and section 3(1) The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 – They were fined £16,000 plus £6,534 in costs at Leeds Magistrates Court on 26 March 2026.

**HSE Inspector Gavin Carruthers said:**

“For this company to have not one but two completely avoidable incidents in such a short time shows systemic health and safety failings.

“Both workers have been left with injuries that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. The fact one of those hurt was a much-love grandmother who had worked at the company for nearly three decades makes these failings all the more stark.

“If proper guarding, training, and safe systems of work had been in place than these two workers would not have sustained such life-changing injuries.

“HSE will take action when companies fail in their duties to keep workers safe.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Arfaq Nabi and paralegal officer Zara Salman

**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 – [Woodworking – 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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**[HSE invites applications for new Chair of the Science Quality and Assurance](#)**

# Group

HSE is looking for an experienced scientist, engineer or analyst to Chair the Science Quality and Assurance Group (SQAG).

SQAG provides the HSE Board, HSE Chief Executive and Director of Science with robust external assurance of the science, engineering and analysis (SEA) work which underpins HSE's decision making.

## **About the person**

We welcome applications from people who:

- are eminent in a scientific, engineering or analytical discipline, with evidence of national and/or international impact and demonstrable ability to work confidently across a wide range of relevant scientific disciplines
- have experience of working on expert committees or in an equivalent capacity, in trans-disciplinary teams, and are experienced in managing complex discussions
- are a skilled communicator who can provide leadership and direction
- have experience in leading and managing research programmes, and extensive experience working across the scientific community in a leadership role – it's expected that any technical experience will be at the applied end of the research landscape
- have a collaborative style and an aptitude for partnership working and an ability to engage with people in a respectful and inclusive way
- have a good understanding of the policy and regulatory context in which HSE works and knowledge of the role played by HSE in relation to other players in the health and safety system

## **About the role**

As the Chair of SQAG, your key responsibilities will include:

- leading the group to provide independent and objective assurance to the HSE Board and the HSE Director of Science on the quality, alignment and impact of HSE's SEA activities
- working with HSE's Director of Science to define the scope of work
- ensuring the group upholds standards and good governance in accordance with its terms of reference
- guiding discussions within the group towards shared conclusions while making sure that differing or minority views are captured and appropriately reflected
- representing the group within HSE and being the main point of contact between the group and HSE's Board and Director of Science
- presenting findings from the group's activities to HSE's Board

Duties as Chair of SQAG are expected to take in the region of 12 days per

year. This would include chairing at least 2 meetings of the full group each year, attending at least 2 deep dives per year (each lasting up to two days) and covering SQAG related items at the HSE Board (virtually). SQAG related meetings will be held face-to-face, with the option for some hybrid meetings depending on the nature of the discussions.

## To apply

To apply send a brief CV and supporting letter to [hse.secretariat@hse.gov.uk](mailto:hse.secretariat@hse.gov.uk) quoting SQAG APPLICATION in the subject field.

Applications must be received by 12pm (midday) on Friday 17 April 2026. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged by email.

## Applicant pack

For full information on this opportunity please refer to the [Applicant pack for SQAG Chair](#). Please note that the applicants pack sets out the assessment criteria.

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# [Construction firm fined after death of teenage labourer](#)

- 19-year-old labourer died after falling six floors from a ventilation shaft
- HSE investigation found that the ventilation shaft had been covered only by a sheet of plasterboard and roofing foam
- Jerram Falkus Construction Limited fined £40,200

A construction firm has been fined £40,200 after a teenage labourer died falling down a ventilation shaft on a London building site.

Renols Lleshi, 19, was helping to dismantle scaffolding on the 12th floor roof garden of a block of flats being built at the Ark Soane Academy site, Mill Hill Road, London W3 on 5 July 2023. As he stepped onto a ventilation shaft the covering gave way, and he fell six floors to his death.

Renols father said “My family and I are devastated by the loss of Renols. To know that his death was caused by an accident which was entirely avoidable only makes our loss even harder to cope with.



Renols Lleshi

“We are grateful to the Health & Safety Executive for their efforts to investigate the accident and prosecute one of those responsible for Renols’s death. However, nothing anybody can do can bring our loved one back or lessen our grief in any way.”

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that the ventilation shaft had been covered only by a sheet of plasterboard and roofing foam. Routine inspections of the building did not include the roof garden area, meaning the inadequate covering went undetected and no warning was given to the scaffolding team.

HSE guidance on [working at height](#) states that employers should carry out as much work as possible from the ground and ensure workers can safely access and leave areas where work at height is required. Equipment used for working at height must be suitable, stable and strong enough for the task and properly maintained.

Employers and those in control of work at height must ensure activities are properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people, including the use of appropriate equipment.

Jerram Falkus Construction Limited pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £42,200, a surcharge of £2000 and ordered to pay £5000 in costs at City of London Magistrates Court on 18 March 2026.

**HSE Inspector Natalie Prince said:** “Falls from height are one of the biggest causes of workplace fatalities and major injuries. This was a wholly avoidable incident that led to the death of a young man.

My thoughts are with Renols family and friends.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Arfaq Nabi and Senior Paralegal Manager Stephen Grabe.

### **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 are available.
4. Relevant guidance can be found here: [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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## Waste management company fined after employee falls from height

- Worker broke leg after falling from compost screening machine while clearing blockage.
- HSE investigation found company failed to assess risks and provide safe system of work.
- Employees were able to bypass safety measures while cleaning machinery.

A green waste recycling company based in West Sussex has been fined after an employee broke his leg when he fell from a compost screening machine.

Simon Pateman was working for Woodhorn Group Limited at its green waste recycling site in Tangmere, Chichester, on 16 February 2024 when he climbed onto a Komtech compost screening machine to clear a blockage from the fan housing.

The machine was suspended at height within a large barn and lacked sufficient measures to prevent falls. As Mr Pateman climbed onto the machine he slipped, trapping his left leg between the machine and its frame.



Compost screening machine

The momentum and lack of guardrails around the fan housing caused Mr Pateman to fall backwards onto the gantry, striking his head on a handrail while his leg remained trapped. He sustained a broken leg which required surgery to insert a metal plate and screws.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Woodhorn Group Limited had failed to assess the risks associated with cleaning the machine, including the risk of falls from height from the unguarded edges around the fan housing.

The company's standard operating procedure also failed to provide employees with instructions on how to safely clean and unblock the fan housing. The investigation further found the company had failed to prevent access to

dangerous parts of the machine, with the interlocked gate not preventing access to employees during the cleaning process for the 'stars' – rotating discs used to break down larger clumps of compost

HSE guidance on [working at height](#) states that employers should carry out as much work as possible from the ground and ensure workers can safely access and leave areas where work at height is required. Equipment used for working at height must be suitable, stable and strong enough for the task and properly maintained.

Employers and those in control of work at height must ensure activities are properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people, including the use of appropriate equipment.

Woodhorn Group Limited, of Woodhorn Business Centre, Woodhorn Lane, Oving, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 2BX, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £14,000 and ordered to pay £6,500 in costs at Brighton Magistrates' Court on 16 March 2026.

**HSE Inspector Stephanie Hickford-Smith said:**

"This was an entirely preventable incident that has had a significant impact on Mr Pateman's mobility and quality of life.

"The measures implemented by Woodhorn Group after HSE's intervention, including new guarded working platforms around the fan housing and over the 'stars', demonstrate what was reasonably practicable and should have been in place all along."

This HSE prosecution was brought by enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski and paralegal officer Hannah Snelling.

**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. Guidance on working at height can be found here: [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 in England can be found [here](#) and those for Scotland [here](#).
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# Bakery company fined after employee suffers hip fracture in fall

- Employee fractured their hip after falling from a large plastic pallet box while disposing of food waste into a skip
- The company failed to carry out a suitable risk assessment for loading skips and did not provide appropriate equipment for safe working at height
- HSE guidance is available

A Bolton bakery company has been fined £16,667 after an employee fractured their hip falling from a large plastic pallet box while working at height.

The incident occurred on 15 April 2024 at Greenhalgh's Craft Bakery Limited's site in Lostock, Bolton. The employee had been standing on a pallet box to dispose of food waste into the top of a skip when they fell.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that Greenhalgh's Craft Bakery Limited had failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for loading skips and had not provided appropriate equipment to ensure safe access. The investigation also found that inadequate supervision and monitoring had allowed unsafe working at height practices to become commonplace.

Greenhalgh's Craft Bakery Limited, of Crescent Road, Bolton, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £16,667 and ordered to pay costs of £4,333.66, plus a victim surcharge of £2,000, at Tameside Magistrates' Court on 13 March 2026.

Working at height remains one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death. HSE guidance on [working at height](#) explains how to plan and carry out work at height safely, including the importance of selecting appropriate equipment and ensuring suitable supervision.

**HSE Inspector Leanne Ratcliffe said:** "Every employer has a duty to conduct a risk assessment. Employers should identify work-at-height activities and ensure that safe access is available and used. They should also ensure systems are in place for supervision and monitoring so that unsafe practices are identified and prevented."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Arfaq Nabi and paralegal officer Hannah Snelling.

## **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 [Managing risks and risk assessment at work: Overview – 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](#).