

Hartlepool chemical manufacturer fined £50,000 after two serious incidents within three months

- An employee had four fingers severed when a rotary valve had not been properly isolated from the power supply
- A second employee was struck by a forklift truck when the driver's view was obscured by the load
- Exwold Technology fined over £50,000 for two breaches of Health and Safety at Work act

A Hartlepool chemical manufacturer has been fined after two employees were injured in separate incidents at two of its sites within just three months.

On 3 September 2021, an employee at Exwold Technology Limited's Haverton Hill site in Billingham sustained serious injuries when four fingers on his left hand were severed during machinery start-up. The blades of a rotary valve had not been effectively isolated from the power supply while part of the production line was being prepared between cleaning operations. As the employee checked for air flow, his fingers became caught between the blades and the valve's internal casing, resulting in the amputation.

Less than three months later, on 24 November 2021, a second incident occurred at the company's Brenda Road site in Hartlepool. An employee was struck by a forklift truck after the driver's view was obscured by the load being carried. The driver was unaware that a pedestrian was walking in front of the vehicle at the time of the collision.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that at the Billingham site the company had failed to put suitable procedures in place to effectively isolate dangerous machinery between cleaning operations.

A separate investigation found that at the Hartlepool site the company had failed to effectively manage forklift truck operations and designated pedestrian routes.

HSE provides guidance to help prevent incidents of this kind. For chemical manufacturing sites with machinery related risks, including the safe isolation of equipment during cleaning and maintenance, HSE's guidance on [the safe isolation of plant and equipment](#) outlines the standards and procedures duty holders should follow to ensure hazardous machinery is securely isolated before work takes place.

For workplace transport risks, including the management of forklift operations and separation of pedestrians and vehicles, HSE's [guide to workplace transport safety](#) sets out clear expectations for safe site design, traffic routes, vehicle visibility and segregation measures to prevent collisions.

Exwold Technology Limited of Brenda Road, Hartlepool, pleaded guilty to two breaches of Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £10,492.19 in costs with a victim surcharge of £190 at Teesside Magistrates' Court on 29 January 2026.

In court, the judge referenced the genuine improvement the company had made to improve health and safety following the incidents.

HSE Inspector Jonathan Wills said: "Workplace transport and machinery guarding incidents continue to have lifechanging consequences for those who are simply carrying out their day-to-day jobs.

"The safe isolation of dangerous moving parts must be considered for routine maintenance activities such as this.

"Businesses must also ensure that precautions are in place to protect workers in areas where forklift trucks operate.

For two such serious incidents to occur at the same company in such a short space of time is particularly troubling, and Exwold Technology Limited's work to improve health and safety at their sites is necessary and urgent."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Jonathan Bambro and paralegal officer Rebecca Withell.

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 at [The safe isolation of plant and equipment – HSE](#) and [A guide to workplace transport safety – 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](#)

Contractor jailed after 'kind hearted' teen fell to death during demolition

works

- 19-year-old worker died after falling through garage roof
- HSE investigation found there were no measures in place to prevent or mitigate a fall.
- Jason Hill jailed for 12 months as teen's family warn ignoring health and safety 'has irreversible consequences'

A self-employed contractor has been jailed after a teenager fell to his death during demolition works on a property in Surrey.

Jason Hill had hired 19-year-old Thomas Neate, known as Tom, to help demolish a garage at a domestic property in preparation for an extension, at an address on Glebe Road in Staines-upon-Thames.

On 16 August 2023, Tom, who was local to the area, was on the garage roof removing tiles and other materials when he fell through an opening and suffered severe head injuries. He was taken to hospital but he died several weeks later on 23 September.



Thomas Neate was just 19 at time of the incident

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Hill, 59, of Ashford in Middlesex, had put no measures in place to prevent a fall from height, despite the clear risk. Work was being carried out directly from the roof with no scaffolding, decking, or other protective systems to prevent a person falling through or from the structure.

Working at height remains one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death. HSE has detailed guidance available on [working safely at height and managing construction activities](#) employers should follow to prevent incidents.

In a statement provided to HSE, Tom's family spoke of their devastation at his untimely death.

"Tom was a kind hearted and hard working young man who was such a huge part of so many people's lives," they said.

"His loss has devastated us and knowing it could have been avoided makes that loss even harder to bear. His death should never have happened and while we acknowledge the court's decision, no sentence can reflect what we have lost.

"We can only hope that this case serves as a warning to others that ignoring health and safety has irreversible consequences."

During the course of the HSE investigation, other concerns were identified, including unsafe mini-digger use and a failure to stop members of the public entering the site, indicating broader failings in Hill's approach to managing health and safety.



Thomas fell through the roof of this garage as it was being demolished

The investigation also found no assessment to determine whether asbestos was present. Corrugated concrete sheets being snapped and removed by hand were later found to be made from asbestos cement – a material commonly found in buildings constructed before 2000. There were three other workers were on site who were at risk of exposure to fibres as the sheets were handed down to them, as well as the family whose garage was being worked on.

Before any demolition or refurbishment work begins, dutyholders must assess whether asbestos is present and plan how work will be carried out safely. See [Asbestos Essentials Task sheets](#) for step-by-step instructions.

Jason Hill, of Ashford, Middlesex, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 at Staines Magistrates Court on 30 January 2026. He was immediately jailed for a period of 12 months. No costs were awarded.

HSE Inspector Jennifer Lester said: "Jason Hill's failure to put in place basic safety measures has cost a young man his life.

"The fact he has been sent to prison demonstrates just how seriously this has been taken.

"Working at height remains one of the most well-known and significant causes of death and injury in construction, and simple, recognised precautions would have protected Thomas Neate from harm.

“Even small contractors and individuals working on domestic projects have a legal duty to ensure the safety of workers and members of the public.

“Failing to take these precautions can have devastating consequences, as this tragic incident starkly demonstrates. Our thoughts are with Tom’s family and friends as they mourn their loss”

This HSE prosecution was brought by enforcement lawyer Julian White and paralegal officer Lynne Thomas.

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Building materials manufacturer fined over £600,000 after worker suffers life-changing injuries at Tarmac plant

- Worker’s legs crushed between metal frames weighing over a tonne
- HSE investigation uncovers failure of firm to act after previous incidents
- Guidance states employers must ensure dangerous machinery is effectively guarded

A national manufacturer of building materials has been fined £633,300 after an employee’s legs were crushed between one-tonne metal frames moving on a production line.

Richard Ogunleye, a father of three from South Woodham Ferrers in Essex, was working for Tarmac Building Products Limited at its manufacturing plant in Linford, Essex, on 22 July 2022 when he entered a fenced area to manually clean and inspect frames. The frames, which carry large blocks through the manufacturing process, move around the factory on a trackway.

Richard entered the fenced area through an interlocked gate which, when opened, was supposed to prevent frames from moving on that section of the track. As he was working on the stationary frame, another frame moved along the trackway into the section and struck him. Richard's legs were crushed and pinned between the two frames.

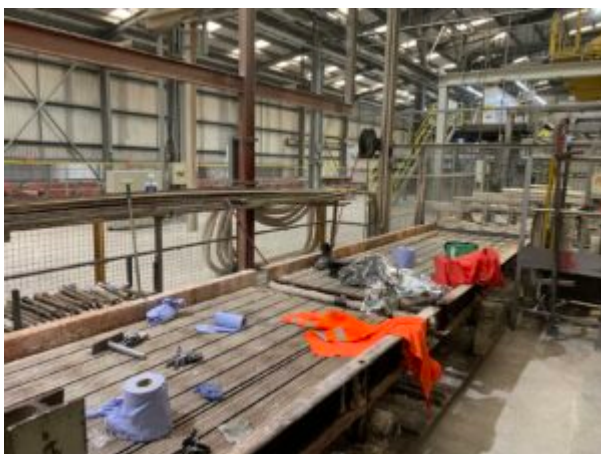
He was trapped as the frames continued to move along the track, pushing him towards machinery on the next section. Richard's right leg was broken and the other severely bruised as the frames moved over axles on the track. His colleague saw the incident from a distance and ran to help, pressing the emergency stop button in time to prevent further injury.

Richard spent two weeks in hospital, where a metal rod and screws were used to repair the injuries to his right leg. He was unable to return to work for over a year and underwent extensive physiotherapy.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Tarmac Building Products Limited failed to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery, namely the moving frames on the track, or prevent the frames from moving when employees entered the danger zone. The interlocked gate which employees used to enter the frame cleaning area did not stop the power on the preceding sections of track and would therefore not prevent a frame from moving into this area when employees were working.



Images from site



The HSE investigation also revealed that the company had failed to act following several near misses which had occurred on this section of the track

in similar circumstances. The investigation also found that a risk assessment had been carried out by the company several years before the incident which identified “additional control measures required to reduce risk to an acceptable level”, but these were not put in place until after Richard was injured.

HSE guidance on [safe use of work equipment](#) states that employers must take effective measures to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery.

Employers should also be [investigating accidents and incidents](#) of near misses as part of their monitoring process to identify why the existing risk control measures failed and what improvements or additional measures are needed.

Tarmac Building Products Limited, of Interchange 10 Railway Drive, Wolverhampton, WV1 1LH, pleaded guilty to failing to discharge their duty under Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £633,300, ordered to pay £5,583 in costs and a victim surcharge of £2,000 at Chelmsford Magistrates’ Court on 29 January 2026.

HSE Inspector Connor Stowers said:

“This was a serious and entirely avoidable incident, which has had profound consequences for Mr. Ogunleye, and were it not for the quick action of a fellow worker, the injuries he sustained could have been worse.

“Employers need to ensure that dangerous machinery is guarded effectively, and this goes beyond the initial installation. Employers should frequently monitor how effective their measures are and make changes as needed. Monitoring arrangements should include properly investigating near misses and previous incidents.

“In this case, had the previous near misses on the block production line at Tarmac Linford been fully investigated and sufficient action taken, this life-changing injury would never have occurred.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Julian White and paralegal officer Farhat Basir.

Further Information

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3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Relevant guidance on machinery guarding can be found here <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l22.htm> (Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998: Approved Code of Practice and guidance). Further guidance on monitoring for safety and investigating workplace accidents can be found here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm> (Managing for health and safety); <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg245.htm> (Investigating

accidents and incidents: A workbook for employers, unions, safety representatives and safety professionals).

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](#)

Stone company fined £50,000 after worker fatally struck by falling granite slabs

Blyth Marble Limited has been fined after a worker was killed when granite slabs fell from a lorry loader at the company's premises in Larkhall.

Hamilton Sheriff Court heard that on 4 September 2024, Steven White, 61, was offloading granite slabs from a lorry loader at Blyth Marble Limited's premises at 1 Carlisle Road, Larkhall. Mr White was working on top of the flatbed section of the lorry when two granite slabs, with a combined weight of over 900 kilograms, fell and struck him, causing fatal injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that vertical safety posts, which provide a physical barrier to prevent slabs from toppling, had been removed during the offloading operation. While it was accepted custom and practice for the posts to remain fitted during offloading it was not specified in the company's Safe System of Work.

The investigation also found that while lifting two slabs at once was regular practice, the company's Safe System of Work failed to distinguish between single slab lifting and multiple slab lifting and lacked specific instruction for handling multiple slabs. Additionally, Mr White was working alone on the lorry loader, whereas the Safe System of Work specified that two people should be involved in offloading operations.



Image from site

Further information on the safe handling of stone slabs and lifting operations can be found at [Handling and storage of large sheet stone slabs – HSE](#) and [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations \(LOLER\) – HSE](#).

Blyth Marble Limited, of Carlton Industrial Estate, Carlton In Lindrick, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £50,000 with a victim surcharge of £3,750 at Hamilton Sheriff Court on 28 January 2026.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Principal Inspector Martin McMahon said:

“This was a tragic incident which could have been prevented had the company made sure the appropriate safety measures were in place and followed during offloading operations.

“Employers must ensure that safe systems of work are not only in place but are sufficiently detailed to address all foreseeable risks, including the requirement for safety equipment to remain in position and for adequate personnel to be present during hazardous operations.

Our thoughts remain with Steven White’s loved ones, and we hope today’s verdict offers them a measure of closure.”

Further Information

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3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Relevant guidance can be found here [Handling and storage of large sheet](#)

[stone slabs – HSE](#) and [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations \(LOLER\) – HSE](#).

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Man sentenced after illegal gas work put family at risk

- Unqualified gas work led to three potentially dangerous gas leaks at family home.
- Property left without heating or hot water for six weeks.
- Man sentenced to 200 hours' unpaid work and £2,000 costs.

A man has been sentenced after his illegal gas work put the lives of an Ulverston family at risk.



Lee Lancaster carrying out illegal gas work

Lee Lancaster, 38, installed a gas combi boiler and gas pipework at a family home in in February 2024. After completing the work, one of the occupiers smelled gas near their meter box. They contacted Cadent, who identified three different gas leaks. As a result, the gas supply to the house was shut off for six weeks, leaving the family of four without heating or hot water.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was alerted to the incident by Gas Safe following their inspection, which classified the work carried out as Immediately Dangerous. A subsequent investigation by HSE discovered that Mr Lancaster did not hold any qualifications in relation to gas work and was not competent to undertake such work safely. It also identified that he was not on the Gas Safe Register; the official list of gas engineers who are qualified to work legally on gas installations.



The meter box following the gas supply being capped

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 or calling 0800 408 5500.

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.

Lee Lancaster, of New Market Street, Ulverston, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 3(1) and 3(3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was sentenced to a 12-month community order where he must undertake 200 hours of unpaid work and was ordered to pay £2,000 costs at a hearing at Barrow-in-Furness Magistrates' Court on 23 January 2026.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector Matthew Shepherd said:

"The risks from uncontrolled gas leaks are well known and can be fatal.

"Mr Lancaster knew he was unqualified and not Gas Safe registered yet still took on this work, putting a family in very real danger.

"We will not hesitate to take action against anyone undertaking gas work where they are not competent or registered to do so."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Chloe Ward and paralegal officer Lynne Thomas.

Further information:

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4. Relevant guidance can be found here: www.gassaferregister.co.uk
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