

Company and contractor sentenced as failures led to evacuation in village

A company and a contractor have been fined following the evacuation of 30 homes in a Derbyshire village.

Residents in Wessington were forced to leave their properties on 21 June 2022 after Elliott Kirk struck an underground gas main with a mechanical post knocker.

Mr Kirk had been installing fencing around Belper Skip Hire Limited's farm on Brackenfield Lane after being contracted by the company.

The striking of the gas main led to over two million kilograms of gas being released, putting 30 homes in the surrounding area at risk of fire and explosion.

Sinead Martin, the investigating inspector at the Health and Safety Executive, said: "In this case, both Elliott Kirk and Belper Skip Hire Limited failed in their duties and, as a result, Mr Kirk and others in the vicinity were put at serious risk. It is extremely fortunate that this incident did not result in serious injury; had the gas ignited, the resulting explosion would have been catastrophic."

The HSE investigation found Belper Skip Hire Limited was made aware of the location of the gas main and had been advised by Cadent, the asset owner, in May 2022 that no ground penetrating works were to be carried out in the vicinity. Despite acknowledging receipt of this information, the company failed to pass it on to Mr Kirk and allowed the work to continue. Mr Kirk failed to obtain underground service diagrams prior to starting the work, and failed to take any other steps to check for the presence of underground services.

Belper Skip Hire Limited, of Ascot Drive, Derby, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £26,667 and ordered to pay £3,173 in costs at Derby Magistrates' Court on 2 December 2024.

Elliott Henry Kirk, of Castle Gate, Nottingham, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 16(2) by virtue of Regulation 25(4) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. He was fined £800 and ordered to pay £3,173 in costs at Derby Magistrates' Court on 2 December 2024.

HSE inspector Sinead Martin added: "Prior to breaking ground, contractors must take suitable steps to check for the presence of underground services. They must then adopt safe digging practices to ensure that no buried services are damaged as a result of their work. Commercial clients have a duty to pass on all relevant pre-construction information within their possession to contractors to enable them to manage the risks."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski and supported by HSE paralegal officer Melissa Wardle.

Notes to editors:

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 England and Wales can be found [here](#) and for those in Scotland [here](#).

Company fined £1.6m following the death of 'happy-go-lucky' 24-year-old

A company has been fined £1.6m after a 24-year-old man was crushed to death.

Jack Phillips lost his life on 8 August 2019 while working for Brand Energy and Infrastructure Services UK Ltd at South Cliff Tower in Eastbourne.

His parents say they are “no longer complete” following the loss of their “happy-go-lucky” son.



Jack Phillips (pictured) was 24 when he lost his life

Jack had been assisting while temporary Mast Climber Work Platform sections were being lifted by a lorry mounted crane.

The load fell on top of Jack when the lifting sling which was attached to the crane snapped.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Sussex Police found Brand Energy & Infrastructure Services UK Ltd, trading as Lyndon SGB, failed to properly plan the lifting operation of the work platform. The company, a provider of temporary access equipment, had failed to identify a requirement for safe exclusion zones. The company also failed to have a suitable robust system in place to ensure all accessories had been thoroughly

examined or disposed when expired. This resulted in out-of-date slings being used.



Jack had been assisting while temporary Mast Climber Work Platform sections were being lifted by a lorry mounted crane.

HSE guidance can be found at: [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations \(LOLER\) – HSE](#)

Jack's parents, Scot and Nichola, said in a statement: "How do you put into words the utter devastation you feel. Our child, our only son, is dead. Our life, our family's life has now changed forever. We are no longer complete without Jack, we will never see our baby boy, the boy we nurtured and helped grow into a young man, get married, raise a family, or grow old.

"His sisters will never have the honour of him being an uncle to their children. We will never have the honour of seeing or meeting his children. Jack was a happy go lucky "Jack the lad". Everyone who had the pleasure of meeting him, loved him."

Brand Energy and Infrastructure Services UK Ltd, of Kingston Road, Leatherhead, Surrey pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £1,600,000 and ordered to pay £23,193.60 in costs at Brighton Magistrates' Court on 27 November 2024.

HSE principal inspector Ross Carter said: "This tragic incident led to the wholly avoidable death of a young man. This death could so easily have been prevented if Jack's employer had fulfilled their statutory duty to plan and manage the risks associated with lifting equipment and lifting operations.

"Brand Energy and Infrastructure Services UK Ltd failed in its duty of care to all its operatives, including Jack, in the way it planned and implemented the lifting operations and the slack customs and practices it allowed to

become part of the safety culture with regard to lifting."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Alan Hughes and supported by HSE paralegal officer Helen Jacob.

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5. Following a trial, Mr Ronald Efferion was found not guilty of breaching Section 7(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Company fined after an explosion seriously injured two employees

A company which produces electricity from food waste by anaerobic digestion, has been fined more than £300,000 after an explosion caused two employees to suffer life changing injuries.

The metal tank the two men were working on was projected high into the air before crashing to the ground nine seconds later.

Footage of the blast has been released.

On 20 September 2017, two employees of Bio Dynamic (UK) Limited were using a grinder to cut and replace pipework at the top of an 11-metre high metal tank containing waste slurry. They were not using harnesses. Sparks from the grinder ignited flammable gasses causing the tank to explode.

Footage of the explosion captured by CCTV has now been released.

Tomasz Patek was flung out of the mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) into the air and landed on the ground in the slurry around the tank. He suffered serious injuries to his back, head and torso and was in hospital for two months. His injuries were so severe that he was not able to work for more than two years.

Tomasz suffers from pre and post-traumatic amnesia and has no specific recollection of the events. In a statement, he reveals the psychological

scars from the incident; “After the accident, I was unable to recover emotionally.

“I did not realise what had happened and was in deep shock. I could not cope with the pain. I could not accept an accident had happened to me.”

Robert Tyrko was thrown into the air and landed back in the basket of the MEWP. Following the incident, Robert’s leg was amputated and he remains wheelchair bound as treatment is still ongoing to receive a prosthesis. Also, he sustained a fractured skull and a piece of metal in his elbow that continues to affect his daily life.

In his statement, Robert explains how the explosion has affected his day-to-day life; “This whole situation is having a huge impact on my relationship. I can’t help my wife in anything like I used to be able to. Magda is both wife and husband because all my responsibilities fell on her; along with the kids.

“Also my personality is explosive. I lose my patience very quickly. I attended appointments with a psychologist because I had nightmares that I was still having this accident.”

A joint investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Environment Agency found that the company had failed to ensure the health and safety of its employees and others nearby. The company had kept and treated waste in a manner likely to cause pollution to the environment. The explosion was caused by multiple failures in the company’s management system and exacerbated by multiple breaches of the company’s environmental permit.

At a hearing at Nottingham Crown Court on 22 November 2024, Bio Dynamic (UK) Limited, of Colwick Industrial Estate, Nottingham:

- pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 38(2) of the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2016 (EPR), and s.33(1)(c) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA).
- They were fined a total of £304,500 and ordered to pay £228,998 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Richenda Dixon said: “It’s remarkable that Robert and Tomasz weren’t killed.

“This incident resulted from fundamental and multiple failings by the company to properly manage its health and safety risks.

“These included failing to ensure that the design, installation and use of the tanks were safe; failing to carry out risk assessments; failing to put in place a safe system of work; and failing to train and supervise employees.”

Senior Environmental Crime Officer Iain Regan said: “This was a lengthy and technically complex investigation by the Environment Agency and the HSE during which we found that the company’s attitude towards environmental compliance was largely cosmetic. Although the site had an environmental

permit, the company was not complying with the conditions of the permit or with their own management system and procedures.

"The site had unauthorised gaseous emissions points and undertook modifications to their process which were not risk assessed or notified to the Environment Agency. The company did not recognise or understand the impact that these changes had on the safety of the plant and failed to take action, when warned, which could have prevented the incident. These factors, and a failure to implement permit to work procedures, including appropriate risk assessment, created all the necessary conditions on 20 September 2017 for the explosion which occurred.

"Sites which receive, treat or dispose of waste must be permitted to ensure that they minimise the risk to the environment or human health. Incidents such as the explosion at Bio Dynamic show why it is essential that such sites strictly comply with all the conditions of their environmental permit and take their environmental responsibilities seriously. The consequences of the company's failure to comply with its environmental permit could have been fatal. As it is, two employees have been left with life changing physical and mental injuries which continue to devastate their lives seven years on from this incident."

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5. Guidance on anaerobic digestion can be found here: [Disposal and energy recovery \(hse.gov.uk\)](#), [Dangerous Substances And Explosive Atmospheres, L138: Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002. Approved Code of Practice and Guidance, L138 \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
6. The Environment Agency is the principal body in England with responsibility for the regulation of waste management facilities, the investigation of environmental crime and the prosecution of environmental offences.
7. Environment Agency press releases are available on [UK](#).
8. Guidance from the Environment Agency on anaerobic digestion can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/biological-waste-treatment-appropriate-measures-for-permitted-facilities

Two companies fined after man falls through roof of Salford skate park

Two companies have been fined more than £100,000 after a man fell 30 feet through a fragile skylight as he was working on a roof.

Nicolas Vilela suffered multiple injuries in the incident at Graystone Action Sports Centre, on Brunel Avenue in Salford on 23 November 2022.

Now 43, Mr Vilela had been fixing a solar panel into position on the roof when he took a step back and fell through one of the skylights to the skate park below, narrowly missing several people. His horrific injuries included a partial lung collapse, broken ribs, pelvis, femur and left wrist as well as fractures to lower vertebrae. He spent a month in hospital.



Overview of Graystone Action Sports Skatepark from viewing area

Falls from height remain a leading cause of workplace death and [HSE has published guidance](#) about how these incidents can be avoided.

Speaking as the companies were fined, Mr Vilela said the incident had affected him both physically and emotionally.

He said: "It has had an overwhelming and complicated impact on my life, having, until then, been a very active, dynamic person"

"A fall from a height of 10 metres is not something you survive.

"I broke my femur, pelvis, wrist, vertebrae and ribs. A lot worse could have happened but I am grateful for the fact that I am alive and can walk, but I will live with this trauma for the rest of my life.

"I have developed a fear of heights and a fear of any physical activity that could cause me harm. I am also really worried about how my body will respond

in old age as a result of these injuries.

"I am unable to walk for more than a kilometre without feeling pain and getting very tired due to the loss of strength and mobility in my leg. My pelvic fracture impedes me from doing any heavy lifting and I live in fear of damaging it even more."



Cones used to mark out location of fragile skylights

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that H20 Renewables Limited (H20) were the principal contractor engaged for work to install solar panels to the roof of the indoor skate park and had engaged Green Projects Ltd (GPL) as sub-contractor to fit the roof mounted system. H20 planned the work during which time they were aware of multiple fragile rooflights in close proximity to where the solar panels would be fitted.

The risk assessment produced by H20 stated cones and warning tape would be used as a control measure to warn operatives of the risk of falling through the fragile roof lights, and fixed scaffolding would be used to prevent risk of falls from the perimeter of the roof. By the time the work started on 22 November 2022, the fixed scaffold had only partially been erected, and only the cones had been placed next to the skylights.

Despite the insufficient control measures being present to mitigate the risks from work at height, GPL's operatives were allowed to start work to fit the solar panels.

The investigation also found that H20 Renewables Limited and Green Projects Ltd, had failed to take suitable and sufficient precautions to ensure the safety of workers on the roof. Both companies had also failed to put in place a safe system of work for the installation of solar panels that were to be fitted in close proximity to many of the fragile roof lights present.



Skylight injured person
fell through

H2O Renewables Limited of Hazel Grove, Stockport, pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. They were fined £106,720 and ordered to pay £40,995 costs at a hearing at Manchester Magistrates Court on 20 November 2024.

At the same hearing, Green Projects Ltd of Albert Street, Oldham, pleaded guilty to breaching regulations 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. They were fined £13,340 and ordered to pay £1,600 costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Phil Redman said: "This was a very serious incident that Mr Vilela was extremely lucky to survive.

"A fall from this distance frequently results in life-changing injuries or death.

"It is a timely reminder that all work at height activities must be suitably planned, managed and monitored using a safe system of work."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Kate Harney and paralegal officer Rebecca Withell.

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5. Guidance on [working safely at height](#) is available.

HSE publishes annual work-related ill health and injury statistics for 2023/24

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has today (Wednesday 20 November) published its annual statistics on work-related ill health and workplace injuries.

The statistics reveal that the number of workers reported to be suffering from work-related ill health during 2023/24 is 1.7 million – which is similar to 2022/23 (1.8 million workers).

The rate of self-reported work-related ill health remains broadly similar to the previous year, although the current rate is still higher than the 2018/19 pre-pandemic level.

Approximately half of those reporting ill-health relate to stress, depression or anxiety, with an estimated 776,000 cases in 2023/24. The current rate of self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety is higher than the pre-pandemic level but has decreased from 910,000 in 2022/23.

An estimated 33.7 million working days were lost in 2023/24 due to self-reported work-related ill health or injury.

HSE's chief executive Sarah Albon said: "This year marks 50 years since the legislation which established HSE was passed. Much has been achieved in that time, including a dramatic reduction of around 85 per cent in the numbers of employee fatal injuries in the workplace.

"Today, Great Britain is one of the safest places in the world to work but these statistics serve as a reminder that there is still room for further improvement, and we remain committed to ensuring people remain safe and healthy wherever work is taking place."

HSE's statistics also reveal the impact work-related ill health and workplace injuries are having on Britain's economic performance.

In 2022/23, the estimated annual costs of workplace injury and new cases of work-related ill health reached £21.6 billion, which is £1.6 billion less compared with 2021/22.

The figures also show that 138 workers were killed in work-related accidents

in 2023/24, while 604,000 workers sustained a self-reported non-fatal injury in the workplace during the same period.

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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. Details on HSE's work-related mental health campaign, Working Minds, can be found here [Working Minds – Work Right to keep Britain safe](#)
3. Details on HSE's new 10-year strategy can be found here [HSE strategy 2022 to 2032 – About us – HSE](#).
4. HSE's annual statistics on work-related ill health and workplace injuries for 2023/24 can be found here – [Health and safety statistics – HSE](#)