

Wood panelling firm fined £400,000 after injured worker loses leg

A wood panel manufacturer has been fined £400,000 after a worker suffered life-changing injuries at its factory in Chirk, near Wrexham.

The incident happened at Kronospan Limited on 31 March 2021, when a pack of waste MDF sheets weighing around 350kg fell from a trailer and landed on the left leg of Mark Hughes from Johnstown.

The injuries sustained by Mr Hughes, now 53, were so serious they resulted in him having his left leg amputated below his knee. The loss of his leg has been life-changing and he has since had to move to an accessible house. He is no longer able to carry on with his hobbies and struggles to climb stairs.



Mark Hughes was seriously injured when a pack of waste MDF sheets fell from this lorry

“My injury has changed everything in my life, it is like somebody dropped a bomb on our life and never picked up the pieces,” he said.

“Everything now just takes a lot of planning to do and spontaneous trips do not happen anymore.

“I won’t go anywhere that has a lot of steps.”



The packs of MDF sheets weighed approximately 350kgs

After more than two years off work, Mr Hughes has been able to return to the company, but only in a part-time capacity.

"Some days I feel okay but some days after work I feel absolutely knackered.

"I've worked for Kronospan for 27 years and I feel since my accident it would be difficult to find a job somewhere else and start over," he added.

"A lot of my social connection was from work because I used to work a lot of hours.

"I have a quality of life but it is a lot different than what it used to be."



Kronospan Limited was fined £400,000 as a result of the incident

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Mr Hughes had loaded a flatbed trailer of waste MDF sheets to transport them across the site to be destroyed. When he began to take off the straps holding the sheets in place, a pack fell off the trailer and landed on top of him. The road across the site was poorly maintained and had lots of potholes.

The investigation also found that there was no suitable risk assessment or system of work in place specifically relating to the risks associated with the stacking, movement and loading of waste MDF sheets.

Kronospan Limited of Chirk, Wrexham pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. They were fined £400,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,701 at Wrexham Magistrates Court on 19 November 2024.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Marie Wheeler said: “A man has suffered truly life-changing injuries as a result of this company’s failures.

“The incident was completely preventable had a proper risk assessment been carried out.

“Nor did the company have a suitable safe system of work in place.

“HSE will always take action when basic failures like these result in very serious injury.”

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.
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Plastics manufacturer fined as worker suffers multiple leg fractures

A plastics manufacturer in Kent has been fined £400,000 after an employee was seriously injured by a forklift truck.

The man was struck by the vehicle while walking to collect materials at FloPlast Limited's site at Eurolink Business Park on 4 July 2023.

The driver of the forklift truck failed to see the worker, who sustained multiple leg fractures and a dislocated ankle, requiring him to have a metal plate fitted in his left leg.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found a number of measures lacking at the site in Sittingbourne:

- FloPlast Limited had no documented safe system of work and that nobody was following the measures the firm thought were in place
- CCTV footage showed multiple drivers and pedestrians circulating in close proximity
- A site inspection by HSE found employees were not observing one way systems or following systems of work
- HSE also established that there was no system in place to monitor compliance or to remind employees and drivers of the systems of work
- Finally, it was found that nobody had assessed the vehicles being used by workers to ensure they provided good visibility.

HSE guidance can be found at: [Introduction to workplace transport safety – HSE](#)

FloPlast Limited, of Eurolink Business Park, Sittingbourne, Kent, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £400,000 and ordered to pay £5,567 in costs at Maidstone Magistrates' Court on 14 November 2024.



The forklift truck that struck the worker

HSE inspector Peter Bruce said: "Poor vehicle and pedestrian segregation in the workplace is a common cause of fatal incidents and injuries. The employee in this instance suffered multiple fractures and has had to have a metal plate put into their leg which they will have for the rest of their life.

“Employers need to ensure that they have suitable measures in place to segregate out pedestrians and vehicles. This includes: the provision of safe systems of work, appropriate training procedures and systems for ensuring compliance with those measures.

“Where it is identified that employees are not following these measures, employers should consider the reasons behind this implementing further measures as appropriate to the risk.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Neenu Bains and supported by HSE paralegal officer Daniel Adams.

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Ginsters owner fined £1.28m after employee crushed to death by lorry

The owner of Ginsters has been fined £1.28 million after an employee was killed by a lorry that was delivering supplies to the bakery where it makes its pasties.

Paul Clarke was fatally crushed on 2 December 2021 after being struck by the vehicle as it reversed into a loading bay at The Cornwall Bakery, Callington, operated by Samworth Brothers.

He was taken via helicopter to Derriford Hospital, where he later lost his life.

"Our lives will never be the same without Paul," his mother has said in a statement.



Paul Clarke

The 40-year-old, who had recently joined the bakery as an intake operator, had been moving strip curtains in the loading bay before being struck by the lorry.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found Samworth Brothers had not assessed the risks associated with the temporarily installed strip curtains and that there was no safe system of work to move them out of the way when the lorries reversed into the loading bay. The strip curtains had been installed in place of a faulty roller door.

The site staff had not been provided with training or instructions to move the curtains and had devised their own methods, which included standing in the yard behind reversing vehicles. Mr Clarke was new to the role and was working his first lone shift. Management failings had not picked up the additional risks associated with this task.



The intake bay where the incident occurred

HSE guidance can be found at: [Introduction to workplace transport safety – HSE](#)

Bernice, Paul's mother, said in a statement: "Paul was a family man and loved big family holidays, which will never be the same without him. I have not been on a family holiday since I feel so much guilt towards Paul, we don't celebrate Christmas as the date is too close and it is just not the same."

"Paul and I had a very special relationship between a mother and a son. We were always talking and catching up. I would call him every weekend and see what he was doing. He would always come out with us on a bike ride or a walk. We all miss Paul very much every day, our lives will never be the same without Paul."

Samworth Brothers Limited, of Samworth Way, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £1.28 million and ordered to pay £24,106 in costs at Plymouth Magistrates' Court on 7 November 2024.

HSE inspector Aimie Baker said: "Bernice's words make clear the impact the passing of Paul has had and our thoughts remain with her and her family."

"Workplace transport incidents involving pedestrians are a major cause of fatal injuries in the workplace with 25 such recorded fatalities in 2023/24. Employers should plan their workplace to reduce contact between pedestrians and vehicles.

"Their risk assessment should consider workplace transport activities, including loading and unloading, and ensure that pedestrians are safe from the risks associated with vehicle movements where they interact. The management arrangements further require employers to monitor and review their measures as appropriate for the risks."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyers Daniel Poole and Kate Harney, who were supported by HSE paralegal officer Imogen Isaac and HSE litigation officer Helen Vigus.

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Company fined after worker killed by telehandler

A construction company has been fined £160,000 after a man was killed by a telehandler at a house build site in Glasgow.

Scott Bradley had been reversing the vehicle at the Stepford Road site when it slid down an embankment and overturned on 11 May 2022.

The 44-year-old, employed by Merchant Homes Partnership Limited, had been using the telehandler to move scaffolding behind houses that had been partially built.

Despite the efforts of colleagues and the emergency services, Mr Bradley died from crush injuries at the scene.



The incident took place at a house build site in Glasgow

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Police Scotland found Merchant Homes Partnership Limited, the principal contractor at the site, had not risk assessed the traffic route where the incident occurred.

HSE guidance can be found at: [Construction – Mobile plant and vehicle industry health & safety](#)

HSE inspector James Caren said: "This was a tragic incident and our thoughts remain with the friends and family of Mr Bradley.

"Our investigation discovered that Merchant Homes Partnership Limited had failed in its duty to properly risk assess and introduce measures to ensure the traffic route was suitable for the telehandler being driven by Mr

Bradley. As a result of this, the telehandler's wheels went over the edge of the traffic route while it was being reversed, which tragically led to the vehicle overturning."

Merchant Homes Partnership Limited, of George Square, Glasgow, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 27(2) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The company was fined £160,000 at Glasgow Sheriff Court on 12 November 2024.



The incident took place at a house build site in Glasgow

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Fine for council after man ‘who loved life’ killed by falling tree

Cheshire East Council (the council) has been fined £500,000 after ‘the most amazing man’ was killed by a falling tree.

Christopher Hall, 48, from Wilmslow, was walking his dog in The Carrs – one of the town’s parks – on 28 August 2020, when the large limb of a tree fell and struck him. He received multiple injuries and sadly died at the scene.

Less than a year before, another large limb from the same tree had fallen off but the incident was never investigated by the council or its ground maintenance company Ansa Environmental Services Limited. As the District Judge sentenced both at Chester Magistrates Court on 8 November 2024 he said that the previous incident should have “acted as a wake-up call”.



Chris with wife Fiona and son Sam
on their way to Bali

In a victim personal statement, Chris’s wife Fiona said her husband “loved life and life loved him”.

“Seeing his face, you will get a sense of who Chris was, what he meant to those around him and what we have lost,” she said.

“His image serves not only as a tribute to the most amazing man but also a focal point and brutal reminder of why seeking justice matters so very deeply.

“Chris loved life and life loved him.

“His death was utterly senseless and wholly avoidable.

“He was simply walking our dog on a dry, warm, summer’s day.

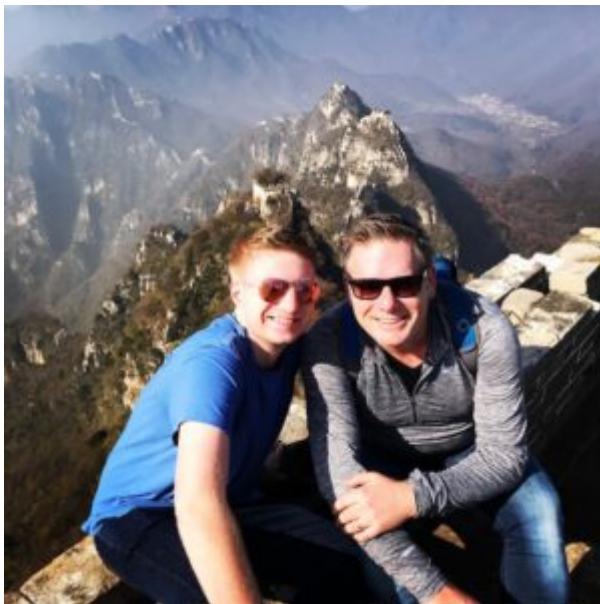
“His loss is colossal, his absence is immense and he leaves a void that can never be filled.”



4. The stump of the tree after it had been cut down, with the limb remnants and floral tributes to the right of the pathway

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that when the same tree had shed another large limb in September 2019, no investigation was carried out by those responsible to assess whether the tree posed a future safety risk. The council, who controlled the park, did not have a formal overarching tree strategy to manage the risks from trees in public places, and their grounds services contractor, Ansa Environmental Services Limited, had no robust tree management policy.

Organisations who are responsible for trees in areas regularly used by members of the public often adopt a concept called “zoning”, where trees are prioritised for proactive checks based on frequency of public access. HSE guidance is available [here](#).



Chris and his son Sam visiting the Great Wall of China

In his own statement, Chris's son Sam spoke about the impact his dad's death has had on his life.

“For the past four years, it's felt like a long, painful trail – a path we

never wanted to be on,” he said.

“Losing dad was losing my life and strength. I miss every little piece of him – his laughter, wisdom, and adventures we shared.

“Our travels ignited a passion in me, but now every journey feels bittersweet without him.

“I’ve taken up diving, which was one of his dreams for us. Being underwater helps me connect with him.”

Cheshire East Council pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. They were fined £500,000 and ordered to pay £7,284 costs at a hearing at Chester Magistrates Court on 8 November 2024.

There was no separate penalty for Ansa Environmental Services Limited of Middlewich, Cheshire, who also pleaded guilty to breaching 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. They were ordered to pay a nominal fine of £500. In passing his sentence, the District Judge said it would have been disproportionate to impose fines on both.



3. Contractors taking down the remaining tree limb after the incident

HSE inspector Lorna Sherlock said: “This was an utterly tragic event that has caused the death of a much-loved husband and father.

“Had this public area been better managed, this death might have been avoided. No lessons were learned from the limb falling off the tree less than a year before.

“Cheshire East Council had not adopted a formal overarching tree strategy to manage the risks from trees in public places since it was formed in 2009.

“There was no overarching, consistent risk identification process leading to zoning of trees in all frequently accessed public areas.

“Fiona and the family have shown great courage and fortitude throughout their ordeal.”

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Matthew Reynolds and paralegal officer Gabrielle O’Sullivan.

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5. Guidance on [managing the risk posed by trees](#) is available.