

# Engineering firm fined £27,200 after endangering workers

- HSE inspection found poor control of metalworking fluids on CNC machines.
- Workers were put at risk of ill-health including dermatitis, asthma and other respiratory conditions.
- The firm failed to comply with Improvement Notices issued by HSE inspectors.

An engineering firm in Bedfordshire has been fined £27,200 after poor management of safety put employees at risk of ill-health including dermatitis, asthma and other respiratory conditions.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecution was the result of a routine inspection in July 2022. HSE inspectors identified a number of concerns which were brought to the company's attention, specifically on the use of metalworking fluids in CNC machines.

This led to HSE inspectors serving formal Improvement Notices, which required the company to prepare a suitable risk assessment for the activities, and to have appropriate testing and monitoring arrangements in place.

When HSE conducted a follow-up inspection it found that, despite the requirements of the Improvement Notices, the company had failed to undertake a suitable assessment. Documentation still failed to identify hazards and potential health effects, did not consider measures necessary to reduce the risk of inhalation of metalworking fluid mist, and did not consider or implement suitable arrangements to maintain metalworking fluid quality. Inspectors also found that testing of fluids remained less frequent than recommended in guidance. The company had not complied with the Improvement Notices, and a prosecution was commenced in January 2024.

HSE guidance states that employers must maintain fluid quality and control bacterial contamination of fluids, minimise skin exposure to fluids, prevent or control airborne mists and, where there is exposure to fluid or mist, carry out appropriate health surveillance. Further guidance on [Metalworking fluids – HSE](#) can be found on HSE's website.

Tracel Ltd, trading as The Engineering Quest, of Sand Road Industrial Estate, Great Gransden, Sandy, Bedfordshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6 of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations and to two charges of breaching Section 21 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. District Judge Sally Fudge fined the company £27,200 and ordered to pay £30,000 in costs at Luton Magistrates' Court on 8 January 2026.

HSE Inspector Stephen Manley said:

"We are committed to maintaining Great Britain's record as one of the safest countries to work in, and our inspection activity is central to delivering

this. “This case was entirely avoidable had the company taken appropriate action following our inspection, and I hope it encourages others to review their arrangements.

“Poor management of the use of metalworking fluids still leads to workers developing lung diseases and dermatitis. Employers must consider how these fluids are used and take steps to reduce and control exposure.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE senior enforcement lawyer Jon Mack and paralegal officer Gabrielle O’Sullivan.

#### **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 [Metalworking fluids – 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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## **Glasgow City Council fined £80,000 after military veteran struck by collapsing lamppost**

- Man was struck standing next to colleague
- Life changing injuries inflicted
- Lamppost was badly corroded and beyond its expected lifespan

Glasgow City Council has been fined £80,000 after a military veteran sustained life-changing injuries when he was struck by a falling lamppost in the city’s west end in June 2023.

A 50-year-old man was standing at the roadside in conversation with a work colleague when the lamppost collapsed, striking him from behind and pinning him to the ground. Overhead cables attached to the lamppost were then snagged by a passing motor vehicle, which dragged the collapsed lamppost over the man.

The incident occurred just after 4pm, on 20 June 2023, on Bellshaugh Road at its junction with Kirklee Gardens and Cleveden Drive, close to Kelvinside Academy. The area was busy with both adult and child pedestrians, with it being a school day.



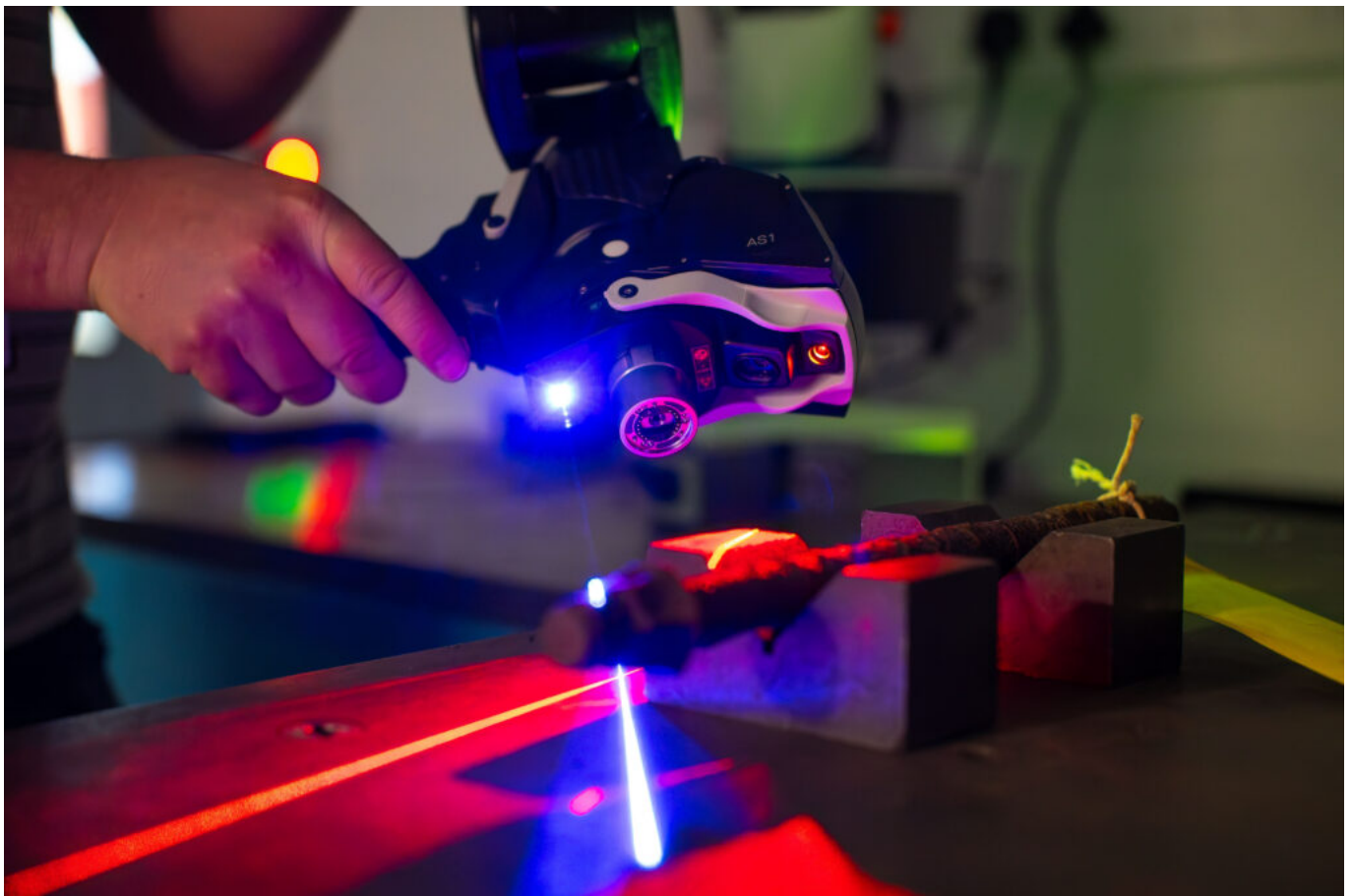


## Incident lamppost prior to collapse

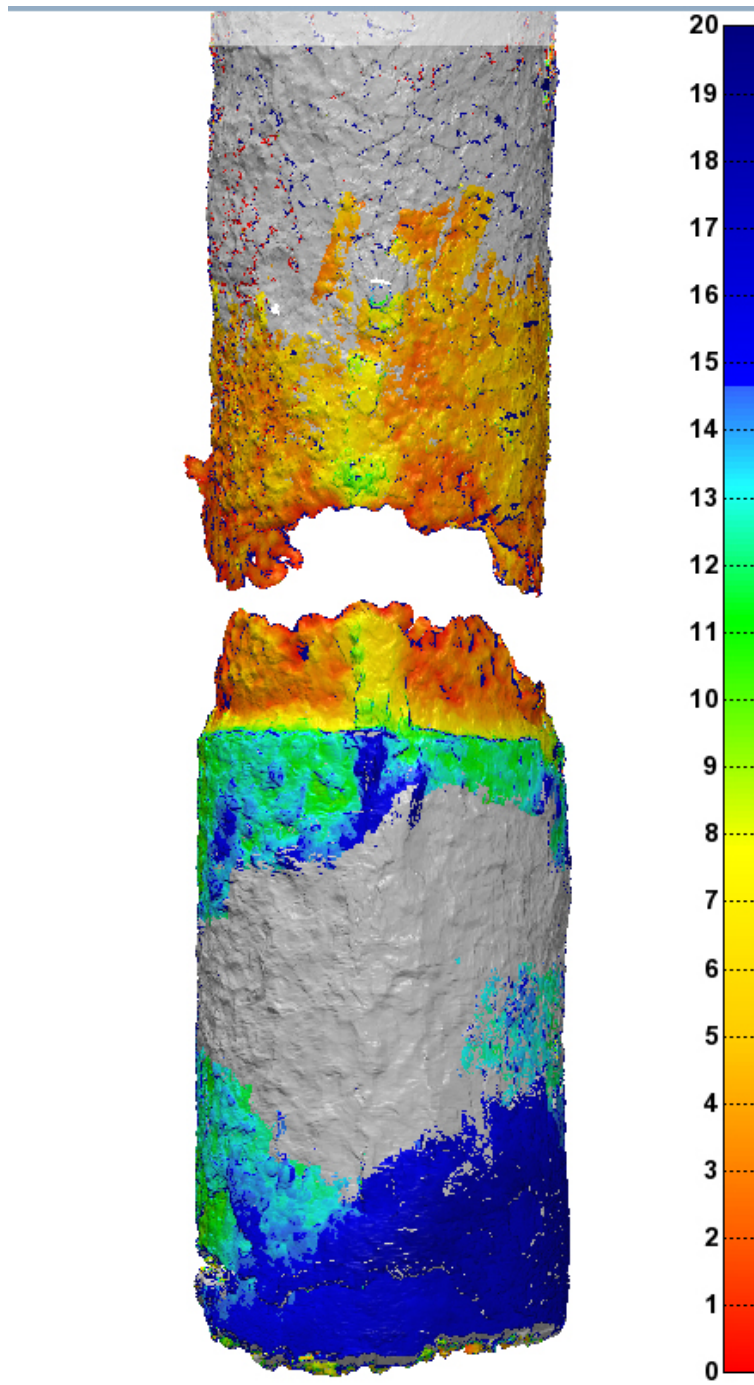
The man sustained severe, life-threatening and life-changing including multiple spinal, pelvic and rib fractures, an open leg fracture, and a fractured left ankle . He spent seven weeks in hospital and has since undergone multiple surgeries, and continues to receive medical treatment. He now has reduced mobility and significant ongoing pain.

Prior to the incident, the injured person retained a high level of fitness and had a very active lifestyle, including regular hill walking and leading a section of army cadets.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) established that the lamppost had structurally failed due to severe corrosion at its base. Loss of steel thickness of at least 60 per cent due to corrosion was measured, with many areas showing significantly greater loss. The lamppost, manufactured in the 1950s or 1960s, was well over twice its expected service life of 20-25 years.



HSE Science Division utilised an arm scanner (image above) during their investigation to gain a detailed understanding of the level of corrosion in the lamppost (image below)



During the last Council inspection in March 2022, the column was identified as being in poor condition and scheduled it for replacement in April 2024. However, HSE's investigation found that the Council's inspection regime failed to identify the extent of corrosion and the immediate risk of collapse. The visual inspections undertaken were inadequate in correctly identifying the condition of the column, the risk of failure and the action required.

The Council did not follow established industry guidance, issued by the Institution of Lighting Professionals, by not prioritising the removal of lighting columns assessed as being in poor condition relative to the consequence of their failure.

Following the incident, the Council removed other similar lamppost with base embellishments from around Glasgow and has since updated its lighting

maintenance procedures.



Image of the corroded lamppost following the collapse

Glasgow City Council, of City Chambers, George Square, Glasgow, G2 1DU, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The Council was fined £80,000 at Glasgow Sheriff Court on 8 January 2026.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Hazel Dobb said: “This incident in which a man sustained devastating, life-changing injuries should never have happened.

“The lamppost that struck him had been identified as being in poor condition, yet inadequate inspections failed to recognise that it was severely corroded and at immediate risk of collapse.

“This case is a stark reminder that local authorities and other duty holders must have effective systems in place to properly assess and manage the risks posed by ageing street infrastructure.”

#### Further information

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4. Relevant guidance can be found here:
  5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed.
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## Cellulose film packaging company fined after workers exposed to harmful gas

- A Cumbria-based packaging manufacturer has been fined after workers were exposed to dangerous hydrogen sulphide gas.
- One employee subsequently died after collapsing in a pump room at the company's Wigton site in December 2021.
- The HSE investigation found failures to adequately assess and control the risk of gas build-up in site drainage systems.

A Cumbria-based producer of cellulose film packaging has been fined £200,000 after workers were exposed to harmful hydrogen sulphide gas.

On 24 December 2021, Futamura Chemical UK Ltd employee, Alexander Cole (known as Alec), was found collapsed in a pump room after exposure to gas at the company's factory premises in Wigton, Cumbria. Delivery driver, Robert Dyer, attempted to assist Mr Cole but was also overcome by the gas. Both men were rescued from the area and Mr Dyer quickly regained consciousness. Tragically, Mr Cole died in hospital the following day, which was Christmas Day. A subsequent inquest concluded that, on the balance of probabilities, hydrogen sulphide had contributed to Mr Cole's death.



The building with the pitched roof is the pumphouse, where Mr Cole was found.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Futamura Chemical (UK) Ltd failed to adequately risk assess its production process, as it did not identify that hydrogen sulphide gas, a by-product of the process, was able to enter the site's water effluent system.

The court heard that Futamura Chemical UK Ltd had conducted a risk assessment for the presence of hydrogen sulphide in the production area and implemented control measures. However, there was inadequate assessment and associated



risk controls relating to the potential for hydrogen sulphide build-up in the site's drainage system. This meant there was a risk that the gas could be released from the drains, putting people at risk of exposure.

Hydrogen sulphide is a clear gas with the smell of rotten eggs and is known to be harmful to health. Depending on the concentration of the gas and the length of time exposed, symptoms can range from dizziness, loss of consciousness and eye irritation through to death.

HSE guidance states that employers must adequately risk assess and implement sufficient controls to reduce a person's exposure to substances harmful to health to a level as low as is reasonably practicable. Further guidance on [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health \(COSHH\)](#) can be found on HSE's website.

Futamura Chemical UK Ltd, of Station Road, Wigton, Cumbria, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay £20,000 in costs at Warrington Magistrates' Court on 6 January 2026.

After the hearing Inspector, Matthew Shepherd, said: "This tragic case shows the importance of conducting a thorough and robust risk assessment to ensure that all risks are properly identified and managed. Where companies use, or produce within their processes, substances harmful to health, it is vital that they have fully considered and controlled all pathways to exposure. Failure to do so can have terrible consequences."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Karen Park and paralegal officer, Benjamin Stobbart.

## Notes to Editors

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  3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
  4. Relevant guidance can be found here:  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/index.htm>
  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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# Unregistered gas fitter sentenced after carrying out illegal work

- Illegal gas work carried out on a house in Torquay leaving an 'immediately dangerous' situation
- Investigation found multiple failings left by unregistered gas fitter
- HSE encourage householders to check the Gas Safe Register for qualified professionals

An unregistered gas fitter has been sentenced after carrying out illegal gas work at a house in Torquay that left the property in an immediately dangerous condition.

Exeter Court heard that Benjamin Owen, known as Ben, trading as BPS and 'Ben the Plumber', attended a property on Barton Hill, Torquay in February 2023 where he removed an old boiler and installed a new one.

Following the installation, the boiler did not work properly. The homeowners arranged for another company to check the installation when Ben Owen was dismissive of their concerns. When this plumber attended, they had serious concerns and called the emergency gas provider, who found a gas leak on the gas supply pipe and classified the situation as 'immediately dangerous', capping the gas supply.

Gas Safe Register was called and attended the site, where they found further defects in the gas boiler installation. A third company was employed by the homeowners to rectify the faults. When they started work, they discovered additional faults created by Mr Owen.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that Ben Owen was not registered with the Gas Safe Register, which is a legal requirement. He had previously been a member of Gas Safe Register, but his registration lapsed in October 2021 when he failed to renew his membership. Since 20 October 2021, he was not registered to undertake any form of gas work.

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.

Ben Owen, of Peter Street, St Hellier Jersey pleaded guilty to contravening Sections 3(3), 26(1) and 27(1) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, ordered to undertake 150 hours unpaid work and to pay costs of £1,000.

After the hearing HSE inspector, Simon Jones, said: "Ben Owen undertook gas work which he knew he was not registered to do and the work that he undertook was found to be dangerous, putting the lives of the homeowners and their four young children at risk.

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

“We advise all householders to check that anyone they allow to work on their gas supply is Gas Safe registered. This can be done at the Gas Safe Register website.”

HSE has guidance on managing gas appliances and equipment safely, as well as what to do in an emergency at [www.hse.gov.uk/gas](http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas)

To check if an engineer is legally permitted to carry out gas work, visit [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Daniel Poole and Paralegal Michael Millman.

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4. Relevant guidance can be found here [www.hse.gov.uk/gas](http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas)
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## **Construction company fined £60,000 after worker falls through unprotected floor opening**

- Worker seriously injured after collapsing wall knocked him through an unprotected floor opening
- No edge protection, no warning signage, no safety instructions given to workers, and no supervisor present at the time of the incident
- HSE guidance on working at height is available

A construction company based in the Northwest of England, has been fined £60,000 after a wall collapsed, knocking an employee through an open stairwell onto a concrete floor below.

Ace Infra Ltd pleaded guilty after an incident led to employee, Mark Jones,

to spend a month in hospital recovering from his injuries.

The court heard how Mr. Jones, a general labourer, was sweeping up dust and debris on the first floor of the building at the end of the working day. Earlier that day, boards had been delivered and laid across a large opening in the floor where a staircase was to be installed. The boards did not cover the entire opening, and no edge protection had been installed around the remaining gap. There was no signage warning of the danger, and Mr. Jones had received no instructions regarding his safety around this area.

While sweeping along the boards, a newly built wall to the left collapsed, knocking him over the unprotected edge onto the concrete floor 2.5 to 3 metres below.

The incident happened on 25 April 2024 at an Ace Infra site at NW Auctions Milnthorpe, Cumbria.

Mr Jones suffered multiple fractures and a dislocated shoulder, spending a month in hospital.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the risk of falling through the gap in the floor had not been addressed, as no preventative measures had been taken. Mr Jones had not been made aware of the risks or the safety measures required. No site supervisor or manager was present when the incident occurred.

HSE guidance on [working at height](#) states that employers must take precautions to prevent falls from heights that could cause serious personal injury, including falls into floor openings. Employers have a duty to ensure workers are not exposed to risks to their health or safety.

Ace Infra Ltd, of 31 St James Drive, Burton, Carnforth, Cumbria, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 by failing to ensure that suitable and sufficient measures were taken, so far as was reasonably practicable, to prevent any person working at height from falling a distance liable to cause personal injury.

The company was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay £4,799.44 in costs, with a £2,000 victim surcharge at Lancaster Magistrates Court on 23 December.

HSE Inspector, Derek McLauchlan, said: "Everyone working in construction has a responsibility to ensure that people are safe. Any work at height is potentially high-risk and requires proper planning and implementation.

"This incident could have been avoided had appropriate control measures and training been in place. Despite the serious injuries sustained, a fall of this height and nature could have resulted in far worse outcomes. Lessons must be learned from this case."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer, Chloe Ward and Paralegal Officer, Zahra Shafique.

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