

'James Bond' builder who threatened HSE inspectors found guilty

- Unsafe work spotted by inspectors from HSE.
- Site manager refused to co-operate and made threats of violence.
- Inspectors had to return to site with police officers.

A builder who threatened inspectors from Britain's workplace regulator and told them his name was James Bond has been fined.

David Robert Lane, 59, was the site manager of an extensive cottage refurbishment in Staffordshire when unsafe work caught the attention of two inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The pair had been carrying out routine inspections in the Rugeley area on 11 February 2025 when they saw two people on the site accessing a roof from the bucket of an excavator.

Clearly identifying the practice to be unsafe, the inspectors decided they had to stop and take action.



Inspectors took this photo of the unsafe working at height work taking place

There were around ten workers on the site and when the inspectors approached, Lane, who would later be identified as the site manager, came over to intervene. He refused to identify himself, except as James Bond, and rebuffed their attempts to inspect the site. He went on to tell the inspectors he was in fact the property owner, that the men on site were unpaid friends and relatives, and that they had no legal right to inspect. He followed that up with threats of violence, at which point the inspectors withdrew.

The two inspectors returned to the site a week later, accompanied by officers from Staffordshire Police. Site manager Lane greeted them with a shout of "It's PC Plod!" while still refusing to identify himself. He maintained that he was the owner, told all his staff not to speak to HSE, except to confirm

that they were his relatives and not at work, and told the inspectors once again that they had no right to inspect and to leave the site.

After making several enquiries, the inspectors were able to identify Lane as the site manager – this resulted in him being served with enforcement action.

Upon receiving notification that he was to be prosecuted for the offence of obstruction, under 2 counts of section 33(1)(h) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, he responded with three expletive laden emails, and said “I won’t jump through your hoops”.

HSE defines work-related violence as ‘any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work’. This can include verbal abuse or threats, including face to face, online and via telephone and physical attacks. It can include violence from members of the public, customers, clients, patients, service users and students towards a person at work.

David Robert Lane, of Talbot Street, Rugeley, Staffordshire, failed to attend Birmingham Magistrates Court on two occasions, and on the latter was found guilty after being tried in his absence on 9 January. He was fined £3,000, ordered to pay full costs of £6,450 and must pay a victim surcharge of £1,200.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Gareth Langston said: “This case highlights the difficulties we face in trying to improve the health and safety of workers across Great Britain.

“HSE inspectors have an important job to do, in safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of people at work. This includes investigating incidents and securing justice for innocent workers and the families that are tragically left behind.

“We conduct more than 13,000 inspections every year and it is through this proactive engagement that we are able to advise employers on how they can improve their ways of working, we only take enforcement action when the circumstances require it.

“We accept that not all employers will be pleased to see us, but the vast majority are professional and accept us with good grace.

“HSE will not tolerate the obstruction of its inspectors, and may prosecute offenders in rare cases such as this, where this is necessary.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by enforcement lawyer Edward Parton 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. 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](#).