

Lanes Group Limited fined £800k after investigation into death of devoted father

The partner of a man critically injured by an exploding jet hose waited until after Christmas to agree to switch off life support.

Estefania Fonseca, who planned to marry Miguel Galvao the following year, was placed in this impossible position following failures by Lanes Group Limited, who have been fined £800,000 following an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

She made the decision for the sake of the three children she had with Miguel. The 51-year-old died on 27 December 2022.



Miguel Galvao

Two-and-half-weeks earlier, on 10 December Miguel was working as a drainage engineer for the utility and infrastructure company. When priming the jetting hose, a loud explosion was heard and the end of the hose whipped up at high speed, striking him. Miguel was rushed to hospital but placed in an induced coma.

The morning of the incident was very cold, with witnesses describing temperatures dropping to around -3 to -4 degrees. Water was being filled into the jetting system (hose, pumps and filters) prior to jetting. The end of the hose was suspended in an inspection chamber when a large pressure release, thought to be due to a build-up of ice in the system, caused the end of the hose to strike Mr Galvao in the face.



The jetting tanker

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company failed to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees. The major failings identified during the investigation were:

- There was no safe system of work detailing how priming of the jetting system should be done safely.
- There was a failure to maintain work equipment in an efficient state, as a number of other jetting vehicles were seen with defective vices.
- There was a failure to monitor use of physical control measures in place.
- Employees were not provided with sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision.

During the investigation, the Water Jetting Association, a trade association representing those carrying out high pressure water jetting, released a safety alert reminding operators of the importance of restraining or anchoring the end of the jetting hose.

[WJA Safety Alert – Water Jetting Safely in Cold Weather – Water Jetting Association](#)

The end of the hose should have been mechanically secured in a system such as the vice provided on the vehicle, like the one shown below.



The vice on the vehicle that should secure the hose

"It felt like the floor had been taken from under me"

After two weeks in hospital, doctors told Estefania there was nothing more they could do for Miguel.

"They asked me if they could switch off the machine and then explained to me that Miguel could pass instantly or breathe by himself between five to seven days.

"Five days would have been Christmas day so I told them they could not do that because of the kids but they could do it afterwards. This was on 27 December.

"Since Miguel passed, I have PTSD – it has affected everything. Miguel was my everything, he was my rock. When Miguel died, it felt like the floor had been taken from under me.

"We lived together for 15 years and had planned to marry at Christmas 2023. We have three children – Angelica, Michael and Jose. It has been so difficult for them to cope without their dad.

"Michael screamed 'my dad is dead' when he saw him in hospital, and he still struggles with anger and grief. Angelica was a real daddy's girl – she has trouble sleeping and misbehaves because she feels no one cares about what happened to her dad. Jose, our eldest, has tried to be strong, but it has affected him deeply too.

"I have good days and bad days, but everything has changed. We used to go out as a family every two weeks – to the cinema, to London, or even just to the park late at night – Miguel loved making memories with the children. We can't do that now. The kids often ask why life is so different without daddy.

"Financially it has also been a real struggle. We relied on Miguel's wages, and I now find myself on benefits, unable to give the children the life we had before. We don't have a car anymore, I can't always afford the heating, and I have to choose which child I can buy something for each month. It is heartbreaking.

"Miguel's dream was to buy a house and retire in Portugal. When my father died, he said he would be happy living in my mum's house there, and that is where we buried him. It is what he would have wanted.

"He worked for this company for nearly 10 years, and it hurts that he never came home from work. They came to his funeral but never spoke to me or the children. That lack of respect has been so painful.

"Miguel was a wonderful father and partner. He went to work that day and never came home. Our lives will never be the same without him."

Lanes Group Limited of C/O Elements Ring Rd, Lower Wortley, Leeds, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom, LS12 6AB pleaded guilty to breaches under Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

The company was fined £800,000, reduced from £1.2 million due to the early guilty plea, and ordered to pay £8,680 in full costs and a £2,000 victim surcharge at City of London Magistrates' Court on 2 October 2025.

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski and paralegal officer Rebecca Withell.

HSE inspector Marcus Pope said:

"This absolutely tragic incident further demonstrates the need for companies to ensure there are suitable safe systems of work for non-routine work, such as work in freezing temperatures where machines are at risk of freezing.

"This investigation and the input from the Water Jetting Association should help demonstrate to the industry the importance of restraining or anchoring the end of jetting hoses when priming systems."

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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](#) are 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](#).
5. Health and safety information for the high-pressure water jetting industry can be found via the Water Jetting Association website: [Health Safety and Medical – Water Jetting Association](#).