

Manufacturing company fined after driver suffers life-changing injuries in fall from HGV trailer

- Driver sustained a brain injury and multiple fractures after falling from trailer
- Company failed to implement adequate fall prevention measures
- Penn Elcom Limited fined £80,000

A manufacturing company has been fined £80,000 after a visiting lorry driver sustained life-changing injuries when he fell from a trailer during loading operations at a site in County Durham.

Graham Davis, 65, a Class 1 driver employed by Dobbs Logistics Ltd, was delivering and collecting goods for Penn Elcom Limited on 18 November 2024 when the incident occurred.

During the loading process, Mr Davis was manually moving cages to and from the cage carrier. When one wheel of a cage became stuck, the cage fell and Mr Davis stepped backwards, falling from the trailer. He suffered a brain injury and multiple fractures. He has been unable to work since the incident.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Penn Elcom Limited failed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and visiting workers by not having suitable and sufficient measures in place to prevent falls from height during loading and unloading operations.



Screen shot from the CCTV footage featuring the lorry that Graham Davis fell from.

HSE defines work from height as work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. A step-by-step guide to working from height and further information is available at [HSE's website..](#)

HSE's guide to [workplace transport safety](#) provides advice for employers on what they need to do to comply with the law and reduce risk. Following this guidance would have identified the risks during the loading process and shown that the risk could have been eliminated entirely by changing how the work was undertaken.

Penn Elcom Limited, of 1st Floor Sackville House, 143-149 Fenchurch Street, London, EC3M 6BN, pleaded guilty to breaching sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay £4537.32 in costs at South Tyneside Magistrates' Court on 18 November 2025.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Beth Chapman said: "Falls from vehicles account for around a third of all workplace transport injuries, many occurring during loading and unloading operations. This was a wholly avoidable incident caused by the company's failure to identify the risks of working at height and implement suitable control measures.

"Had Penn Elcom properly assessed the risks and taken action to prevent falls from height, Mr Davis would not have suffered these life-changing injuries. Employers must take effective measures to prevent falls during loading and

unloading, either by avoiding work at height altogether or by using appropriate equipment and safe systems of work.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Jonathan Bambro and paralegal officer, Zahra Shafique.

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. HSE guidance on loading and unloading vehicles is available at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg136.pdf>
4. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).
5. Further details on the latest HSE news releases are available at [here](#).