

Waste management company fined after employee falls from height

- Worker broke leg after falling from compost screening machine while clearing blockage.
- HSE investigation found company failed to assess risks and provide safe system of work.
- Employees were able to bypass safety measures while cleaning machinery.

A green waste recycling company based in West Sussex has been fined after an employee broke his leg when he fell from a compost screening machine.

Simon Pateman was working for Woodhorn Group Limited at its green waste recycling site in Tangmere, Chichester, on 16 February 2024 when he climbed onto a Komtech compost screening machine to clear a blockage from the fan housing.

The machine was suspended at height within a large barn and lacked sufficient measures to prevent falls. As Mr Pateman climbed onto the machine he slipped, trapping his left leg between the machine and its frame.



Compost screening machine

The momentum and lack of guardrails around the fan housing caused Mr Pateman to fall backwards onto the gantry, striking his head on a handrail while his leg remained trapped. He sustained a broken leg which required surgery to insert a metal plate and screws.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Woodhorn Group Limited had failed to assess the risks associated with cleaning the machine, including the risk of falls from height from the unguarded edges around the fan housing.

The company's standard operating procedure also failed to provide employees with instructions on how to safely clean and unblock the fan housing. The investigation further found the company had failed to prevent access to dangerous parts of the machine, with the interlocked gate not preventing access to employees during the cleaning process for the 'stars' – rotating

discs used to break down larger clumps of compost

HSE guidance on [working at height](#) states that employers should carry out as much work as possible from the ground and ensure workers can safely access and leave areas where work at height is required. Equipment used for working at height must be suitable, stable and strong enough for the task and properly maintained.

Employers and those in control of work at height must ensure activities are properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people, including the use of appropriate equipment.

Woodhorn Group Limited, of Woodhorn Business Centre, Woodhorn Lane, Oving, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 2BX, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £14,000 and ordered to pay £6,500 in costs at Brighton Magistrates' Court on 16 March 2026.

HSE Inspector Stephanie Hickford-Smith said:

“This was an entirely preventable incident that has had a significant impact on Mr Pateman’s mobility and quality of life.

“The measures implemented by Woodhorn Group after HSE’s intervention, including new guarded working platforms around the fan housing and over the ‘stars’, demonstrate what was reasonably practicable and should have been in place all along.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski 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. Guidance on working at height can be found here: [Work at height – 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 in England can be found [here](#) and those for Scotland [here](#).
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Recycling company fined after employee suffers life-changing injuries in telehandler incident

- Worker was crushed against a wall by a reversing telehandler.
- HSE investigation found no suitable risk assessment had been carried out.
- Company failed to segregate vehicles and pedestrians in the yard.

A waste and recycling company has been fined after an employee suffered life-changing injuries after being crushed by a reversing telehandler at a site in Lancashire.

Jordan Champion, from Burnley, was working for Sheridan Skips Burnley Limited at its site in Smiths Yard, Clifton Street when the incident occurred on 12 March 2024.

Mr Champion, now 21, and three other employees were sorting and separating waste material by hand in the same yard as a colleague who was operating a telehandler. Mr Champion was standing against a brick wall at the side of the yard when the telehandler reversed into him, crushing him against the wall.

As a result, Mr Champion suffered multiple fractures, nerve damage to his right arm and internal organ injuries. He also lost partial hearing in his right ear and developed a blood clot which caused optical damage to his right eye, resulting in permanent sight loss in that eye.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Mr Champion and other employees frequently worked in the yard while vehicles operated alongside them. Sheridan Skips Burnley Limited had not undertaken a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks and failed to provide adequate measures for the safe segregation of vehicles and pedestrians. There was no physical protection from vehicle movement, which regularly put employees in considerable danger.

The investigation also found that the telehandler operator could not see clearly while reversing, as the machine was missing mirrors to aid reversing – a deficiency the company had failed to address.

[Workplace transport safety](#) and [hand sorting of recyclables with vehicle assistance](#) provides advice for employers on what they need to do to comply with the law and reduce risk. The guide is also useful for managers, supervisors, employees and their safety representatives, as well as contractors, vehicle operators and other organisations concerned with workplace transport safety.

Mr Champion was in hospital for nearly two weeks following the incident. In his victim personal statement, Mr Champion said: “My incident has caused my family great distress. They permanently worry about me; they never thought

that I wouldn't be safe in work. They say you never expect to see your child go off to work and to get a phone call to say that they have had an incident and might not survive."

Sheridan Skips Burnley Limited, of Cathedral Gates, Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £24,000 and ordered to pay £4777 in costs at Blackburn Magistrates' Court on Wednesday 11 March 2026.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Anthony Banks said: "This young man's injuries could so easily have been avoided with the implementation of safe working practices, including pedestrian and vehicle segregation and safe refuges for workers whilst vehicles were operating. These measures would have ensured that workers present in the yard were not put at risk of being struck by vehicles moving in and around where they were working.

"This should serve as a reminder to businesses operating in the waste industry to ensure that workplace transport is appropriately considered, with control measures introduced to ensure the appropriate separation of vehicles and pedestrians."

The prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Julian White and paralegal officer Hannah Snelling.

Notes to editors

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[Paper and cardboard facilities at Riverside Recycling Centre](#)
[#dundeewestend](#)

Riverside Recycling Centre

Dundee City Council
www.dundee.gov.uk
CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE



Since the reopening of the Riverside Recycling Centre after the initial COVID lockdowns, we have had complaints about the lack of both paper and cardboard facilities.

We have repeatedly raised this and have now had this welcome update from the council's Waste Services Manager :

"I can confirm that paper and cardboard can now be placed in the same skip for recycling, as per our new contractual arrangements that were reported to committee last year

We have been on site today and reminded the attendants of this.

We previously provided small chain lift skips for separate paper recycling but as part of our efficiency improvements we have replaced these with new small hook lift skips for paper/cardboard.

These can be serviced by the same skip lorry that does the larger skips and negates the need for two different skip trucks to service the site.

We will have the signage updated shortly to reflect this as well."

[Dundee recycling study](#)

Dundee Resident?

Participants needed for a study on recycling behaviours by the University of Dundee

Eligibility Criteria

- *Must* be a Dundee Resident
- *Must* be over 18 years old

Study Duration

- This study will take maximum 30 minutes to complete



University
of Dundee



From the Psychology Department at the University of Dundee :

Residents are invited to take part in a study aiming to develop a greater understanding of recycling in the Dundee public. Any Dundee resident aged over 18 can take part.

To find out more and to take part, go to <https://dundee.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/is-it-easy-being-green1>

Any questions – just e-mail rrsfhansen@dundee.ac.uk

[Recycling calendar improvement proposal](#)



I am very grateful to the West End resident who made the following good suggestion recently :

"I'd like to suggest an improvement on how the Council informs residents about the dates when the various refuse bins are collected.

At the moment, as you will know, the Council mails out a card calendar, and on their website you can view or download an electronic version of the same card (https://my.dundee.gov.uk/service/bin_collection_calendar).

My suggestion is that they also provide a link on this page to a file that can be downloaded and then imported into an electronic calendar – the .ics format is commonly used for this purpose. This would be a progressive, useful, and not difficult addition to the service.

I did a quick search on other council sites, and the first one I found, Stirling Council, supported .ics as well as the card approach, so my suggestion is not fanciful."

I raised this with the council's waste services manager who raised it with the IT department to see if this was possible – and it is! Here's the helpful response from the waste services manager :

"IT has advised that this is possible and we shall submit an IT bid to have this completed."