

# Skip manufacturer fined £30,000 after failing to protect workers from carcinogenic fumes.

- Samson Containers Ltd left welders exposed to cancer-causing fumes without ventilation or protective equipment.
- Company failed to act on two separate HSE improvement notices issued in September 2024 and February 2025.
- Company also failed to provide health surveillance to monitor the hearing of their employees exposed to high levels of noise.

A Lancashire manufacturer of skips and metal containers has been fined £30,000 after repeatedly failing to protect its workers from carcinogenic welding fumes at its site in Thornton-Cleveleys.

Despite being served with an Enforcement Notice by HSE inspectors on two occasions, Samson Containers Ltd continued to carry out mild steel welding without adequate control measures to protect their employees. Inspectors also found the company failed to meet its duty to monitor the health of workers exposed to high levels of noise – risking long-term harm.

During a visit to the site on 29 August 2024, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors identified several issues including high-intensity welding without local exhaust ventilation (LEV), inadequate welfare facilities, and a lack of assessment of noise risk, along with other health and safety issues on site. Multiple improvement notices were served.

Inspectors returned on multiple occasions to assess compliance, but found that the company had done nothing to comply with the notices relating to welding fume control and health surveillance for noise. This failure left employees exposed to carcinogenic welding fumes and at risk of becoming seriously ill. The company also failed to provide health surveillance to monitor the hearing of their employees exposed to high levels of noise throughout the shift.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer advises that exposure to mild steel welding fumes can cause lung cancer and possibly kidney cancer in humans. To control the risk, suitable ventilation must be present. Where this ventilation does not adequately control exposure, respiratory protective equipment (RPE) should be provided. Welding should not be undertaken without these control measures in place. This is applicable to welding indoors and outdoors.

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005, Regulation 9 (1) requires employers to provide employees with health surveillance involving hearing checks where they are regularly exposed to high levels of noise or where employees are particularly at risk e.g. pre-existing hearing loss or sensitivity to noise. Health surveillance helps employers to identify early

signs of hearing damage, prevent further deterioration by prompting action, and making sure that their noise controls measures are working effectively.

The company Samson Containers Limited was found guilty at Warrington Magistrates' Court of failing to comply with two Improvement Notices contrary to Section 33(1)(g) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company was fined £30,000 and ordered to pay £4571 in costs along with a victim surcharge of £2000 on 16 June 2026.

**HSE Inspector Gemma Feerick said:**

“This was a company that put its workers at risk of serious, long-term health conditions because it repeatedly failed to get the basics right – even when expressly served with notices to put proper controls in place.

“These fines should send a clear message that HSE takes failure to comply with enforcement notices extremely seriously and will act against companies and individuals who fail to protect the health and safety of their employees.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Julian White and Paralegal Officer Stephen Grabe.

**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 here:
  - [Safety Bulletin 15: HSE Guidance welding fume 2019 – GOV.UK](#)
  - [Welding fume control](#)
  - [L108: Controlling noise at work](#)
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](#).