

School fined £35,000 after child severely burned at carol concert

A London primary school has been fined £35,000 after a child received 45 per cent burns to their body at a carol concert.

The school was found guilty after a trial following an incident at a church on 11 December 2019.

During the carol concert, 60 Year 3 children from the school were waiting in costume, in a narrow corridor, holding 10-inch lit taper candles. As they were waiting, a seven-year-old boy wearing a home-made sheep costume made out of cotton wool balls, caught fire.

The fire was extinguished with some difficulty and the child received first aid at the scene before being taken by air ambulance to Broomfield Hospital and found to have sustained an estimated 45 per cent burns to their body.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the school had failed to take appropriate measures to account for the risks inherent with giving lit candles to children, while wearing potentially flammable costumes.

The injuries sustained by the boy will require on-going, regular, invasive surgeries throughout his youth and into adulthood and have been life changing for him and his family.

The school pleaded not guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act but were found guilty by a jury at Southwark Crown Court on 19 June 2023. At Southwark Crown Court on 30 June they were fined £35,000 and ordered to pay £25,970 in costs

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Sarah Whittle said: "This was a shocking and scary incident that could have so easily been avoided.

"Common sense alone should have been enough to see the risk. Mitigation in this case would have been the substitution of wax candles for flameless ones, thereby reducing the risk to zero. This was a step the school took after the incident but by then it was far too late for a young child who will be forever affected by this.

"The importance of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has never been made so clear."

Notes to editors:

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ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise.

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 the use of candles safely from the London Fire Brigade is available: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/candles/>
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Plymouth City County Council fined £200,000 after failing to protect workers

Plymouth City Council has been fined £200,000 after its failures led to employees developing hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) and carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS).

During 2017 – 2019, two council employees developed HAVS and a further four were diagnosed with CTS as a result of prolonged and uncontrolled exposure to hand arm vibration while working in the grass cutting team or when carrying out arboriculture activities.

HAVS can affect the nerves causing pins and needles and numbness and can result in reduced strength in the hands. It can also vascular components in the hands causing asymmetrical blanching of the fingers and numbness which occur when exposed to cold and wet.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that between 2005 – 2019, Plymouth City Council failed in its legal duty to comply with legislation even though [guidance has been available for employers since 2005](#).

Plymouth City Council pleaded guilty of breaching Section 2(1) of the health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The local authority was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay £25,877 in costs at Plymouth Magistrates Court on 29 June 2023.

HSE inspector Janet Hensey said: “The fine imposed on Plymouth City Council should underline to everyone carrying out similar activities that the courts, and HSE, take a failure to follow legislation seriously.

“We will not hesitate to take action against companies which do not do all that they can to keep people safe. Exposure to vibration is a recognised health risk with potentially disabling consequences.

“There has been relevant legislation regarding assessing and controlling [exposure to vibration since 2005](#), this was a case of the organisation completely failing to identify the risk to employees when carrying out grass cutting and arboriculture activities.”

Blake Morgan Solicitor Agent supported HSE with this prosecution.

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 4. HSE guidance on [Hand Arm Vibration](#) is available.
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[Mum of boy electrocuted in a beer garden calls on pubs and clubs to make sure they’re safe this summer](#)



Danielle Jones and Harvey Tyrrell

The mother of a seven-year-old boy who died after being electrocuted in a pub

beer garden is urging the hospitality sector to make sure their outdoor electrical equipment is safe.

Danielle Jones' son, Harvey Tyrrell, was electrocuted after he touched unsafe lighting in the garden of a pub in Harold Wood, Essex in September 2018.

Danielle, from Romford, is calling on pubs, restaurants, and other hospitality venues to make sure electrical installations and equipment used in outdoor spaces are safe this summer.

Great Britain's workplace regulator, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), is working with the hospitality industry and local authority enforcement officers to increase awareness of safety standards.

HSE says venues should arrange for a competent person to carry out electrical installation work, only using lights and heaters specifically designed for outdoor use, and regularly checking equipment for damage or water ingress. The fixed installation and electrical appliances should be maintained in accordance with the [Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#).

Danielle, 34, said: "People who run pubs and other hospitality venues should regularly check their electrics, especially as pub beer gardens are getting busier at this time of the year.



Harvey Tyrrell

"I'm still hearing of other incidents involving unsafe electrics in pubs and this needs to stop – I don't want any other family to go through what happened to us.

"Harvey was such a beautiful little soul, a cheeky chappie and one of a kind and what sadly happened to him could have been prevented."

The pub owner where Harvey died pleaded guilty to Harvey's manslaughter and to stealing electricity from an unmetered supply and was jailed for 9 years in 2021.

Mark Dawson, HSE's Head of local authority and safety unit, said: "The hospitality sector will be looking forward to a busy summer period. Those responsible for outdoor spaces need to make sure electrical equipment is in good condition, safe to use and regularly checked."

The information below is for the installation and use of plug-in electrical equipment. Anyone selecting, using, or maintaining such equipment should be competent to do so.

Before installing any outdoor equipment:

- Consider using extra low voltage or solar equipment to provide a safer installation
- Only select equipment that is suitable for outdoor use
- Check that equipment is not damaged particularly if it has been stored from previous use.
- Ensure that the existing electrical installation is in good condition and compatible with the equipment to be installed. This will include being able to accommodate the electrical load so that circuits and sockets are not overloaded.
- Ensure that equipment is only connected to a socket protected by a suitable RCD.
- Ensure that sockets are in good condition, suitable for use outside if appropriate and in a location where they won't be accessed or damaged by customers.
- Remove equipment from its packaging before installation.
- Switch off the electrical supply before connecting

During installation and when using the equipment:

- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions and retain for future reference
- Ensure that equipment is installed in locations where it will not be damaged and away from flammable materials and decorations.
- Check frequently for any damage to equipment and replace failed lamps as appropriate.
- Always switch off before replacing lamps and use the correct replacement lamp
- Keep equipment packaging for any future storage. If equipment is stored ensure that it is not in damp or excessively hot conditions

Any permanent fixed installation of equipment that does not require sockets, and the installation of sockets should be undertaken and thereafter maintained by a competent electrician.

Further information on [electrical safety](#) is on HSE's website.

While HSE doesn't regulate the hospitality sector, any concerns about electrical safety should go to the relevant local authority.

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Runcorn business park operator fined £13,000 after worker injured in fall

A Runcorn business park operator has been fined £13,000 after a worker fell more than 13 feet through a fragile roof.

The man sustained life-threatening injuries, including a fractured skull and collapsed lung as a result of the fall, which happened while he was carrying out repairs at a premises on The Heath Business and Technology Park on 17 June 2021.

The work [had not been properly planned, and risk factors had not been identified](#) and managed.

- In the five-year period between 2017 and 2022, 174 workers in Great Britain – a quarter of those killed in accidents at work – tragically fell to their death. HSE guidance can be found at: [Work at height – HSE](#).

Nathan Cook, an enforcement lawyer at the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), told Warrington Magistrates Court, the man was an employee of SOG Resources Limited. He had been carrying out repairs to a building occupied by Arvia Technology Ltd.

The company had been carrying out the work on the roof for almost three weeks and despite regular checks by the engineering manager, no measures were taken to mitigate the dangers posed by the presence of weaker skylight panels. These parts of the roof should have been covered or had perimeter barriers put in place to prevent access.

The employee was conducting the repair when he tripped and fell through an unprotected skylight, landing on the ground more than 13 feet below. The fall was partially broken by rubber matting on the floor of the building, which may have prevented even more serious injury.

An investigation by HSE found that SOG Limited had failed to take appropriate precautions to ensure the safety of workers on the roof.

SOG Resources Limited of The Heath Business & Technical Park, The Heath, Runcorn, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act. The company was fined £13,000 and was ordered to pay £2,666 costs at a hearing at Warrington Magistrates Court on 27 June 2023.

HSE inspector Rose Leese-Weller said: "This was a very serious incident, and it is fortunate nobody was killed as a result.

"This work had been planned for around six months; however, the risk assessments were inadequate. Work had carried on for three weeks prior to the incident, and the manager had visited, yet no action to prevent the fall through the roof light was taken."

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3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Guidance on [working safely at height](#) is available.

Serco fined £240,000 after man killed in crash with litter picking vans

Serco has been fined £240,000 after a man was killed when the lorry he was a passenger in crashed into litter picking vans blocking a lane of a dual carriageway in Norfolk.

Tony Skerratt, 44, from Enfield, was in the passenger seat of a Wren Kitchens lorry when it hit the vans, which were obstructing the inside lane of the A11 near Attleborough, between Norwich and Thetford. The incident happened at around 12.45pm on February 26, 2019.

The vans had been moving along the road slowly, stopping from time to time to allow bags of rubbish to be collected. The litter picking was being carried out by Serco employees. Serco had been contracted by Breckland District Council to carry out the work.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Serco Limited failed in its health and safety management of litter picking activities on high-speed dual carriageways.

It had not provided its employees with appropriate work instructions to ensure the litter picking activity was safe. It also failed to supervise and monitor the high-risk activity to ensure it was carried out safely.



Tonk Skerratt, pictured here with his sister Terri

In a statement, Mr Skerratt's family said the pain of their loss was as tender now as it was on the day of the incident.

They said: "The pain the family feels is as tender as the day we heard the worst possible news imaginable.

"The court case has been ongoing for so long, the wounds are unable to heal until justice is served. Tony was the youngest of four children and the only son to mum and dad. They grieve for the loss of their son – the pain of losing a child is something you can never recover from.

"It wasn't Tony's time to go, otherwise we would of had the chance to say goodbye."

Serco Limited, with head offices based at Bartley Wood Business Park, Hampshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £240,000 and ordered to pay costs of 37,074 at Norwich Crown Court on 23 June 2023.

HSE Inspector Saffron Turnell said: "This was a tragic incident where the death of a member of the public could have easily been prevented had Serco Ltd implemented and monitored the robust management systems required to ensure such a high-risk activity could be carried out safely.

"The company's failings put its employees and those using the dual carriageway at significant risk and this incident has left a family grieving the loss of much loved son, brother and uncle. Our thoughts remain with the family."

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