

# £500,000 fine for firework firm after young father killed in blast

A Peterborough company has been fined £500,000 after a young father was killed in an explosion at a firework factory.

Twenty-four-year-old Brendan Ledgister was working for Le Maitre Ltd when one of the products he was using ignited and caused an explosion on 2 October 2018.



The aftermath of the explosion at Le Maitre Limited

Brendan, who lived in Peterborough, had only become a father eight months before and was described as “kind, gentle and funny”.

Brendan’s father Gladstone Ledgister said: “It was the worst day in my life. My only son and best friend died. The suffering is still embedded in my mind and will never leave me until I die.

“He was such a nice boy, he was kind, gentle, funny, and happy – and its all been taken away from us – especially from his daughter. She didn’t even know him.”

Peterborough Magistrates Court heard how Mr Ledgister was making a pyrotechnic composition when one of the products ignited causing a significant explosion. He suffered serious burns in the explosion and died of his injuries the following day.

An Investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) determined that the system of work for working with explosive materials was not safe. The tools he was provided with were unsuitable for handling the explosive materials and the facility in which he was working was not of an appropriate standard. The company also failed to provide him with adequate training and he was not appropriately supervised.



The aftermath of the explosion at Le Maitre Limited

Le Maitre Ltd (now known as LM140121 Limited) were found guilty of breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act as, on and prior to the 2 October 2018, they failed in their duties to ensure so far as reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of their employees, and hence were found guilty of under section 33(1)(a) of the Act. The company were fined £500,000 and ordered to pay costs of £ 20,788.65.

Speaking after the hearing the HM Inspector of Health and Safety, Stuart Charles said: "Our thoughts and sympathies remain with Brendan's family.

"While the explosive sector in the UK is relatively small and incidents relatively uncommon, when they do occur they often result in significant injury or death.

"This case should reinforce the message to the sector that appropriate precautions must be maintained or an event such as this is likely."

**Notes to Editors:**

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and 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 [Explosives Regulations 2014: Safety Provisions](#) is available.

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**Safety won't be forgotten in the race**

# to Net Zero



Professor Andrew Curran, Director of Science and Chief Scientific Adviser at the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Safety will be a central part of Great Britain's move to Net Zero the top scientist at the country's workplace regulator says.

The government has committed to decarbonising our economy by 2050 and that will involve embracing new technologies.

Professor Andrew Curran, Director of Science at the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and a member of the government's Chief Scientific Advisers Network, says scientists at HSE are already working to address challenges presented by the move to Net Zero.

The safe use of lithium-ion batteries, testing hydrogen-fuelled vehicles in tunnels, and the safety of hydrogen as a potential fuel for flights are just some areas where HSE scientists are safe-guarding safety during the introduction of Net Zero technologies.

This work is highlighted in the annual HSE science review published today (March 28).

Professor Curran said: "HSE scientists have a key role to play here. Bringing together scientific expertise and Britain's proud health and safety record, they have spent more than 20 years identifying and tackling emerging safety challenges to enable the safe introduction of net zero energy technologies. They have worked with policymakers, industry, and researchers around the world.

"By doing so HSE is playing an important role in enabling a safe pathway to

reaching net zero by 2050.”

In addition to work on net zero safety, ensuring the learning from the COVID-19 National Core Study enables future pandemic preparedness, and the authorisation of the first UK application of a pesticide using a drone are some of the other case studies captured in HSE’s Annual Science Review.

Read more about HSE’s case studies highlighted in this year’s [Annual Science Review](#).

To hear HSE scientists and engineers presenting 5 min ‘Turbo Talks’ on their work, please join us for the 2023 HSE Annual Science Review launch seminar, online, at 1pm on 20 April. To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hse-2023-annual-science-review-seminar-tickets-598384804057>

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## **Inaugural conference for new building safety regulator**

- The new Building Safety Regulator held its first conference in Westminster
- Over 900 practitioners attended the event to prepare for the new building safety regime
- Minister for Building Safety, Lee Rowley said: “We need to ensure that those working in the building industry have the knowledge and confidence to properly engage with this new regime and make it a success.”

The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) held its first national annual conference to support industry and dutyholders prepare for new building safety regulations in England.

The event, held at the Methodist Central Hall in Westminster, saw more than 900 practitioners come together including architects, landlords and building

control professionals – all keen to raise their awareness and understanding of what the BSR will expect from them over the next 18 months.

This is the largest event held by the regulator since being established, and as such it provided the first opportunity for representatives from across the industry to engage with those leading the regime.

The conference featured a topical programme of information, learning and interactive Q&A sessions with senior BSR policy leads, and key industry representatives, who offered delegates valuable insights into the robust regulatory regime and guidance on the legal duties and requirements under the Building Safety Act 2022.

A notable session was headlined by Dame Judith Hackitt on the Industry Safety Steering Group's third report in which she discussed culture change in the built environment industry.

The conference comes at a 'milestone moment' for building safety as the registration process for high-rise residential buildings (HRBs) is set to begin in April.

Owners and managers of approximately 12,500 HRBs in England will have until the 1 October 2023 to register with the Building Safety Regulator or face investigation and prosecution.

Key information around this crucial registration stage was covered in detail throughout the event to help dutyholders better understand how to comply. Other sessions that proved popular with delegates included presentations on the HRB planning, design and construction gateways and the drive to increase competency across the industry.

In his keynote speech, Minister for Building Safety, Lee Rowley MP set out the importance of collaboration to delivering better standards: "We need to ensure that those working in the building industry have the knowledge and confidence to properly engage with this new regime and make it a success."

HSE Chief Executive Sarah Albon said: "Over the past 18 months, we have been talking directly to residents and to resident groups – listening to their concerns, trying to understand what would give them the reassurance they need, and to make sure we take the steps needed to get this right. People must be safe in their own homes – and they must feel safe too.

"You all have a really important part to play in ensuring that we can set up this new regime successfully and that HSE can continue, through the BSR, to protect people and places."

Chief Inspector of Buildings Peter Baker said: "The regulatory reforms that will start from April will ensure that you all lead the behaviour change that is needed and do what is required to protect residents. They also introduce a new regulator 'with teeth' to hold to account those who chose not to learn the lessons and improve."

Conference sessions will be available to view online in the next few weeks.

[Sign up](#) to get further updates on BSR.

**About BSR:** The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) is an independent body established by the Building Safety Act, 2022, and is part of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). BSR will raise building safety and performance standards and oversee a new stringent regime for high-rise residential buildings, as well as overseeing the wider system for regulating safety and performance of all buildings and increasing the competence of relevant regulators and industry professionals.

**About HSE:** The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and 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.

**About the Building Safety Act, 2022:** The Building Safety Act gained Royal Assent on the 28 April 2022 and makes ground-breaking reforms to give residents and homeowners more rights, powers and protections. The Act overhauls existing regulations, creating lasting change and makes clear how residential buildings should be constructed, maintained, and made safe. Full implementation of the Act is in October 2023, which means each building owner should have their building safety regime in place by this time.

HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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## Company fined £2.3m after workers put at risk of death

A major pipeline transportation company has been fined £2.3million for safety breaches after its employees were exposed to risk of serious injury and even death while working on a leaking pipeline containing petrol under pressure.

Workers at Exolam Pipeline System Ltd, formerly known as CLH Pipeline System (CLH-PS) Ltd, were excavating a suspected pipeline leak in the woodland adjacent to the B1398 and M180 near Holme, North Lincolnshire, between 7 to 10 March 2018. The employees were working in an area where a previous repair had taken place.

The risks arising from the excavation work and exposure were significant. An unknown defect on the previous repair of the pipeline which contained petroleum under high pressure had the potential to form a flammable cloud extending over several metres from the work area, causing those in the immediate vicinity to potentially be covered in a heavy spray of petrol and engulfed in petrol vapour. If ignition had occurred before the area could be

evacuated, then there would have been a very high risk of death or serious injury.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident found that Exolum Pipeline System Ltd failed to properly identify and control the risks associated with carrying out a pipeline repair.

Exolum Pipeline System Ltd, of King William Street, London, was found guilty of an offence contrary to Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and an offence contrary to Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 following a trial at Grimsby Crown Court. The company was fined £2.3million and ordered to pay £157,431 in costs at Grimsby Crown Court on 24 March 2023.

HSE inspector Mark Leadbetter said: "This incident had the potential to cause serious injury or death to multiple casualties and could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

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## **Kent waste company fined £150k for failing to comply with HSE notices**

A Kent waste company has been fined £150,000 for several health and safety breaches.

City of London Magistrates' Court heard that a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspection in August 2020 found that employees of BSP (Knockholt) Limited manually sorting through waste in its yard near Orpington were at risk of being struck by heavy machinery moving next to them. It also found

that there were inadequate rest facilities for employees to use during break times.

[Two improvement notices were served](#) on the company in September 2020, and a date for compliance in October 2020 was set. However, a further site inspection in February 2021 found that the company had not complied with either notice.

At City of London Magistrates' Court on 22 March 2023, BSP (Knockholt) Limited, which went into liquidation in October 2022, was found guilty of failing to comply with two Improvement Notices.

It was fined £140,000 for failing to comply with a notice served under regulation 17(1) of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, regarding segregation of vehicles and pedestrians, and £10,000 for a notice served under regulation 25(1) of the same regulations regarding welfare facilities. Costs of £2,459 and a victim surcharge of £190 were also awarded.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Gordon Carson said: "BSP (Knockholt) Limited showed a disregard for the safety and health of its employees by failing to take action, when required by HSE, to ensure they were not at risk of being struck by heavy plant, and provided with adequate and clean welfare facilities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"HSE will not hesitate to take action against duty holders where they have placed their employees at risk and have decided not to comply with enforcement action."

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