

Asbestos: Young tradespeople need to know the risk

Millennials, gen Z workers and other younger people who work as plumbers, electricians, and in other trades need to take the risk of asbestos much more seriously.

That's the message from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The workplace regulator has launched a new campaign to raise awareness of the risks associated with the dangerous substance.



The campaign, called [Asbestos and You](#), will target all tradespeople with a focus on younger workers in trades such as plastering and joinery. HSE wants to reach construction workers who started their careers after the use of asbestos was banned in 1999.

The regulator is concerned the length of time it takes for symptoms to develop after asbestos exposure could lead to a perception among today's younger workers that it is something that only impacts older people who were working before the ban.

Five thousand people a year still die from asbestos related illnesses and asbestos can still be found in buildings built or refurbished before the year 2000.

Asbestos containing materials were used extensively in the construction and maintenance of buildings in Great Britain from the 1950s until the ban. That means construction workers of all ages could still be exposed to asbestos fibres today.

HSE's chief executive Sarah Albon said: "Asbestos exposure in Great Britain is still the single greatest cause of work-related deaths. We are committed to protecting people in the workplace and reducing future work-related ill health.

"Everyone working in construction today, of any age, must take the risk from asbestos seriously.

"Asbestos is dangerous when not maintained in a safe condition or if physically disturbed without the right measures in place to avoid fibres being released into the air."

If asbestos fibres are inhaled, they can cause serious diseases such as mesothelioma, asbestos related lung cancer, asbestosis, and pleural thickening. Construction tradespeople of any age are at significant risk if they disturb materials containing asbestos during repairs and refurbishment.

HSE's head of health and work policy Mike Calcutt said: "These diseases often take a long time to develop, and it can take 20 to 30 years for symptoms to appear.

"It is crucial that all workers know how to recognise the dangers and take the right actions to protect themselves and those around them from being exposed to asbestos fibres."

Find out more about the [Asbestos and You](#) campaign, and visit HSE's website for [further guidance on asbestos](#).

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.

[City council fined after school caretaker dies](#)

A city council has been fined after a school caretaker died following a fall from a ladder.

David Mobsby, was working was at Blatchington Mill School, a community school in Hove, and suffered a fatal head injury when he fell from the ladder on 3 August 2018.

Mr Mobsby, 71, had been cleaning the roof of a bike shed at the school, on Nevill Avenue, Hove, using a standard-length broom and a telescopic surface cleaner to reach across the roof before falling approximately 2.5 metres onto the tarmacked surface below.



Mr Mobsby was using the yellow ladder (pictured) before his fall



The bike shed Mr Mobsby was cleaning

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Brighton and Hove City Council, the local authority that employs staff at Blatchington Mill School, had failed to ensure that the cleaning of the school's bike sheds was properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out using a safe work method.

HSE guidance on work at height can be found here: [Work at height – HSE](#)

Brighton and Hove City Council pleaded guilty to a breach of Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The council was fined £66,666 and ordered to pay £5,000 in costs at Brighton Magistrates' Court on 28 February 2023.

HSE inspector Natalie Pomfret said: "Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work-related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well-known. In this case, this tragic incident led to a man's avoidable death. This death could have been prevented if his employer had acted to plan and supervise the work activity and ensured a safe method of work was in place."

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New regulator takes major step forward in 'landmark moment for building safety'

- **Regulator to protect high-rise residents in England from unsafe building practices**
- **12,500 buildings must be registered with the Building Safety Regulator**
- **New 'Be Ready' campaign calls on industry to prepare for the new safety regime**

Those responsible for the safety of high-rise residential buildings in England have six months from April to register with the new Building Safety Regulator.

The Building Safety Regulator was established to protect high-rise residents from unsafe building practices in England in response to the Grenfell Tower fire.

Under the Building Safety Act, high-rise residential buildings which are 18 metres tall or higher, or at least seven storeys, with two or more residential units are defined as 'higher-risk'.

Across England there are approximately 12,500 of these buildings and the new regulator will require all of them to be registered from April 2023, with a named person responsible for maintaining their safety.

A new campaign aimed at owners and managers of high-rise residential buildings will highlight their new legal duties. It will call on those responsible for the safety management of higher-risk buildings to prepare for a new wave of regulatory change to ensure that they are ready to step up and comply.

The registration process is a crucial stage in setting up the new building safety regime. Registering buildings in scope will be a legal requirement and owners and managers who fail to comply by October 2023 will be investigated and may face prosecution.

HSE Chief Executive Sarah Albon said: “This registration process is an important step towards building a safer future for residents of high-rise buildings. We want it to be clear where responsibility for safety in these buildings lies.

“As the Building Safety Regulator, we will draw from our experience to provide guidance and oversight for the industry and lay the foundation for a world-leading building safety regime, which is a part of our mission to protect people and places.”

Chief Inspector of Buildings Peter Baker said: “Our message is clear – industry must raise its standards and residents of high-rise buildings in England must be kept safe.

“This is a landmark moment for building safety, the information provided through registration will be an invaluable part of our crackdown on unsafe building practices. Those who are responsible for high-rise residential buildings must register; failure to do so will be against the law.”

Building registration is a major step in a package of measures to ensure high-rise residential buildings are safe for residents and users.

It follows the introduction of Planning Gateway One in August 2021 and will be followed by more robust building control of high-rise developments, and the certification of occupied high-rise buildings by the new Regulator.

A campaign will run throughout March to help owners and managers of high-rise residential buildings prepare for their legal responsibilities. For more information, go to buildingsafety.campaign.gov.uk

Notes to editors

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). Led by Chief Inspector of Buildings, Peter Baker, we 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.

About the CIB: As Chief Inspector of Buildings, Peter Baker will head up the Building Safety Regulator to deliver the new regime for higher-risk buildings and ensure effective oversight of the entire building safety environment. Peter is the first head of the building control profession, and leads the work to provide independent, expert advice to industry, government, landlords and residents. Peter has over 30 years' experience with HSE as an inspector and has held a number of senior operational positions, most recently as HSE's Director of Building Safety and Construction. Since 2017 he has led HSE's involvement in the Government's Building Safety Programme.

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

Company fined after worker fractures back and ribs following fall

A company has been fined after an employee fractured his back and ribs following a fall from a house in Frodsham, Cheshire.

The man was working for Renka Limited after the company had been hired to supply and install windows, doors and frames at the property on Village Lane.

Renka Limited workers arrived at the property on 31 August 2021 to begin the installation of a rooflight, but the tower scaffold they had been provided with was too large and could not be positioned in the area where it was needed. As a result, the workers made a platform using the boards from the tower scaffold and wedged them between the roof joists. They then gained access to the work area via the external scaffolding.



The site on Village Lane, Frodsham, Cheshire

Following the installation of the rooflight frame, one of the workers stepped from the roof onto the platform, at which point a board broke, causing him to fall approximately five metres to the ground below. As a result, the worker, who was 35 at the time, suffered fractures to his back and ribs.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Renka Limited failed to adequately plan the work at height and failed to provide suitable work equipment to enable the work to be carried out safely. The investigation also found that the company's employees had not been provided with any instruction as to how the work should be carried out, and had not been provided with adequate training for working at height. HSE guidance on working at height can be found here: [Work at height – HSE](#).



View of the roof inside the property

Renka Limited, of Birmingham Road, Marlbrook, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £12,000 and ordered to pay £3863.25 in costs at Birmingham Magistrates' Court on 20 February 2023.

HSE inspector Sara Andrews said: "The incident could have been prevented by the adequate planning of the work and the provision of suitable equipment for work at height, together with relevant training and instructions. It is fortunate that the injuries suffered by the employee were not far more serious, or even fatal."

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HSE's Science and Research Centre welcomes scientists of the future

Scientists of the future got to see at first hand the excellent work that goes on at the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Science and Research Centre in Buxton.



A-Level students from Meadowhead School in Sheffield spent time at the specialist facility meeting HSE scientists and hearing from them about their careers, career paths and academic route into science.

The visit, organised by HSE, encourages students to think about science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) as a future career.

A group of 21 students started the day with a tour of the wider site, looking at the experimental facilities and test rigs and received an overview of the type of projects and science-based work that has been conducted in Buxton over the years.

Smaller groups of students based on their A-level choices then spent time with relevant specialists including engineers, biochemists, fire and explosives specialists, analytical chemists, human factors specialists, toxicologists, noise and vibration specialists, ventilation specialists, and microbiologists.

Professor Andrew Curran, HSE's Director of Science, said: "We are very proud of all our facilities and our specialist scientists, engineers and analysts at Buxton and this visit allowed students to speak to our inspirational scientists who were able to showcase some of their work first hand.



"We hope we've helped broaden the students' views of hands-on science, technology, engineering, and maths by showing them areas of work they may not have considered before and how rewarding a career in STEM can be.

"Visits like this are really important as they can trigger a 'wow' moment for a student which inspires them to take a new direction in their career."

HSE's Science and Research Centre is set on a 550-acre site in Buxton, Derbyshire, and accommodates an impressive inventory of laboratory and large-scale testing facilities.

Around 380 scientists, engineers, occupational health and hygiene specialists and support professionals are based at the site. Here they provide the research and evidence that HSE requires to underpin its regulatory activities, protect people and places and make Great Britain one of the safest places in the world to work.



Cerys Evans, careers leader at Meadowhead school and sixth form, added: "Students were keen to find STEM-related work experience, but were struggling to find the right settings within travelling distance, which is where the team at HSE stepped in.

"Students found out about the work carried out at the centre, touring the facilities, hearing from specialists, and finding out more about specific experimental activity linked to biology, chemistry, physics, human factors and engineering.

"Students will then put together a presentation of their experience to be shared with younger students at school. Many thanks to HSE for offering our students this great opportunity to explore STEM careers."

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