

“Serious gaps” found in protecting workers from excessive noise

Three-quarters of noisy workplaces lacked essential knowledge on maintaining hearing protection equipment, inspections have found.

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) most recent inspection campaign has identified significant failings in workplace hearing protection, uncovering issues with employee training and equipment management.

One in four workplaces had noise levels requiring mandatory hearing protection, placing crucial responsibilities on employers to ensure proper provision and management of protective equipment. However, inspections revealed concerning gaps in implementation.

At high-noise workplaces, more than 75% of employees lacked essential knowledge about storing hearing protection, checking for damage, or reporting equipment faults to employers. Nearly two-thirds (63%) had not received [guidance](#) on the critical importance of wearing protection continuously during exposure to harmful noise levels.

Training deficiencies were particularly evident, with 80% of employees receiving no instruction on proper wearing techniques, including avoiding interference from hats and hoods, keeping hair clear of earmuffs, or ensuring compatibility with other personal protective equipment such as hard hats and eye protection.

Most significantly, 95% of employers had failed to verify whether workers wearing hearing protection could still detect vital warning signals, including fire alarms and vehicle reversing alerts.

Chris Steel, HSE's Principal Specialist Inspector, said: “The gaps that we found in implementation are serious. They place an added risk to workers of excessive exposure to noise when they may believe they are being protected.

“If your defence against workplace noise is to give your workers hearing protection then you need to check that it works. How confident are you that the hearing protection you have supplied is in good order, is being worn when it should be, how it should be, and that it is not stopping your workers from hearing warning signals?”

To address these issues, HSE is promoting the CUFF checking system to help employers assess hearing protection effectiveness.

The acronym covers Condition (equipment integrity), Use (proper deployment when needed), Fit the ear (correct wearing), and Fit for purpose (appropriate specification).

HSE specialists will deliver guidance at industry events and webinars, providing [practical advice](#) on implementing effective hearing protection

programmes and using the CUFF system to safeguard workers from noise-induced hearing damage.

Read a [feature piece](#) from HSE's Principal Specialist Inspector Chris Steel.

[Update from HSE on Coney Beach investigation](#)

The investigation into last month's incident at Coney Beach Amusement Park continues, with the ride in question now being inspected by Health and Safety Executive (HSE) experts at its laboratory in Buxton.

Several children were injured in the incident involving the Wacky Worm ride at the venue in Porthcawl, South Wales at around 5.30pm on Wednesday 13 August. No one was seriously hurt but a number of people required hospital treatment.

HSE issued a Notice to Leave Undisturbed on the Wacky Worm ride, in the immediate aftermath, to allow the ride to be inspected as it was at the time of the incident. In addition, a prohibition notice was issued on the ride, which means in the future the ride would need to be repaired and checked by an independent and competent person before being put back in service.

Other rides at the park were inspected and one nearby ride, the Mini Jet Ride, was also issued with a prohibition notice, but has been subsequently repaired after safety issues were found.

Simon Chilcott, principal inspector at HSE, said: "While the school summer holidays are now over, it is completely understandable that many people continue to feel the impact of what happened in Porthcawl last month.

"We've worked very closely with the police and taken swift action to preserve evidence and keep people safe. Witness accounts have been shared with us, as well as footage taken on the day of the incident, and these will be used to inform our investigation.

"The investigation is likely to take some time, but once it is complete, a decision will be made on what further action should be taken."

Update on investigation into incident at Netley Marsh Steam and Craft Show

The investigation into last month's incident involving a fairground ride at the Netley Marsh Steam and Craft Show continues.

An 18-year-old woman was injured on the evening of Saturday 26 July 2025 during the event in Hampshire. She was taken to hospital and sustained serious injuries.

HSE inspectors and amusement device specialists have visited the site as part of the ongoing probe and are now appealing for images from festivalgoers.

The ride involved in this incident was a 'Showtime' funhouse featuring free rollers on the upper level.

HSE principal inspector Nicola Pinckney said: "We are thoroughly investigating this serious incident to establish whether there have been any breaches of health and safety law.

"We are appealing for anyone who may have photographs or videos which cover the upper left-hand side level of the Showtime funhouse that was at the Netley Marsh Steam and Craft Show, specifically in the free rollers area, taken between 6pm and 10:25pm on Saturday 26 July to contact us. This material could assist our investigation.

"Once our investigation is complete, a decision will then be made on what further action will be taken."

Anyone with photographic footage from the specified area and time period is asked to email HSE at Basingstoke.Admin@hse.gov.uk identifying in the email the location of the footage they hold and the time the footage was taken.

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 on the HSE's [Enforcement Policy Statement](#) is available.
-

Fine for chemical company after worker suffers burns

- Worker suffered burns from a steam hose.
- HSE investigation found steam hose wasn't safe.
- Company had no understanding of risks involved.

A chemical company has been fined £100,000 after one of its workers was permanently scarred from burns from a steam hose at a site in Motherwell.

A 23-year-old was burnt across his back and other areas of his body as he attempted to clean a process water tank on 23 October 2019. At the time he had been working for Dundas Chemical Company (Mosspark) Limited at its site at Omoa Works in Newarthill for around two years.

The company operates a large rendering plant that processes animal waste and food industry waste to produce proteins, fats and oils used in the oleo chemical, fuel, and feed industries. As a result of this process, the water tank and vickery would need occasional cleaning. The process water tank is shown in the image below:



It was during a nightshift that the man had been instructed to undertake cleaning duties on the process water tank, the vickery and the walls and floors in that area. The company provided pressure washers as well as a steam hose for cleaning down difficult areas where there may be tallow or other animal residues.

The steam hose was heavy and cumbersome to manoeuvre, with the uninsulated nozzle also becoming hot.. The man and a colleague therefore took it in turns to carry out the steam hose task.

After a period of time they stopped to have a break. While his colleague then went on to carry out other duties, the 23-year-old proceeded to finish the

cleaning on his own.

He did this with the aid of a small cherry picker – attaching the steam hose to its basket. After the basket had been raised to the required height, the steam hose and nozzle spun round and steam began flowing into the cherry picker basket directly at him. He quickly turned his back to prevent his face being burned, while manipulating the nozzle of the hose away from him and lowering the basket of the cherry picker, at which point he was then able to run through to one of the deluge showers to cool his burn injuries. He was taken to hospital with steam burns to several parts of his body, which have left scars to this day.



The vickery at the site

An investigation carried out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the nozzle fitted to the steam hose was unsafe as it did not have a trigger or other mechanism fitted to allow the operator to start or stop the flow out of the nozzle at the point of operation. It also found that the mixing valve and set-up for supplying hot water for cleaning purposes was not maintained in an efficient working order or in good repair. Supervisors at the site were aware that the mixing valve was passing steam, however no action was taken to investigate the issue or prevent it from happening.

HSE inspectors also found the maintenance and engineering team had no sound engineering understanding of the risks involved when setting up such a washdown system and how to mitigate or control those risks. The company provided information to HSE that there were no records associated with the maintenance of the valve, hose or nozzle.

Dundas Chemical Company (Mosspark) Limited, of Mosspark, Brasswell, Dumfries, pleaded guilty to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. It was fined £100,000 at Hamilton Sheriff Court on 18 August 2025.

HSE inspector Ashley Fallis said: “Had a safe system of work been in place then this incident would not have happened.

“The lack of appropriate risk assessment, method statements, training and

supervision for both the maintenance team who installed the valve, and the operators tasked with using the system, led to a situation where those involved were unaware of risks or simple control measures.

“This catalogue of failures resulted in a young man sustaining very serious burns, to which he still bears the scars to this day.

“We will not hesitate to take action against companies that fail to protect their employees.”

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. 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](#).

[Public consultation opens on restricting PFAS in firefighting foams](#)

- Six-month consultation seeks views on UK REACH technical dossier and proposed restrictions.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), in its role as the Agency for UK REACH, today opened a six-month public consultation to gather stakeholder views on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in firefighting foams.

The opening of the UK REACH consultation links to the publication of the Annex 15 restriction report, which presents HSE’s scientific analysis and evidence base for potential restrictions on PFAS use in firefighting foams in Great Britain.

The consultation provides an opportunity for those who use foams from industry, and other stakeholders, such as trade associations, to comment on the proposals before the opinions are made and sent to the Defra Secretary of State, and the Scottish and Welsh Governments for a decision on whether to bring a restriction into law.

Dr Richard Daniels, HSE's Director of Chemicals Regulation Division said: "HSE's proposals have been developed through robust scientific methodology and where possible we have spoken with interested parties from across Great Britain. Now we are looking for more information from our stakeholders.

"We're seeking evidence-based feedback on our analysis to ensure any future restrictions are proportionate, effective and tailored to Great Britain's specific needs."

This work takes forward the recommendation from our analysis in 2023 that PFAS in firefighting foams are prioritised for action ahead of other uses of PFAS, as firefighting foams are one of the largest sources of direct releases to the environment.

The consultation runs until 18 February 2026 and full details, including the restriction report and supporting documents, are available [here](#). HSE has also published a [Q&A document](#) to help stakeholders understand the scope and limitations of the consultation.

Further information:

1. PFAS are persistent chemicals covering thousands of substances used across many industrial sectors
2. The consultation focuses solely on PFAS in firefighting foams and does not cover other PFAS uses or legacy contamination
3. The 2023 Regulatory Management Options Analysis, which recommended prioritising PFAS in firefighting foams for action, can be found here – [Analysis of the most appropriate regulatory management options](#).
4. Questions outside the scope of this specific restriction report should be directed to Defra
5. HSE is Great Britain's independent regulator for workplace health and safety. HSE also has the role as the Agency for UK REACH under the UK REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) Regulations.