

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 (Mossspark) 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 (Mossspark) Limited, of Mossspark, 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.

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HSE to lead investigation into death of George Gilbey

The investigation into the death of George Gilbey is now being led by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

George, 40, was working in Shoeburyness, Essex on 27 March 2024, when he fell to his death.

The involvement of Essex Police has now concluded. HSE will now lead the criminal investigation.

HSE inspector Natalie Prince said: "We have been a part of this inquiry from the outset, and we will continue to thoroughly investigate George's tragic death as the lead agency.

"This will aim to establish if there have been any breaches of health and safety law.

"We are in regular contact with George's family and our thoughts remain with them at this time."

Further information.

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. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.

HSE issues urgent offshore gangway safety notice

- Power failures and control errors cause gangways to retract without warning, risking fatal falls
- Oil and gas operators to review gangway systems or stop operations
- Safety measures required before workers can safely use motion compensated gangways

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has issued a [safety notice](#) today (8 August) to highlight the risks of potentially fatal gangway accidents to offshore workers.

Serious risks have been identified where motion compensated gangways retract without warning due to power failures or control system errors. This puts workers at risk of falling from height, being struck by moving parts, or suffering serious injuries including death.

HSE is calling on operators in oil and gas, and renewable energy sectors to review their gangway arrangements. Any gangways that cannot provide sufficient warning before automatic retraction must be taken out of service until proper safety controls are installed.

Howard Harte, Operations Manager (Offshore Regulation) at the Health and Safety Executive, said: "Despite a previous safety alert in 2024, and the publication of industry good practice, we have become aware that gangways that provide insufficient warning before auto-retraction are still being used in the offshore oil and gas and renewables industry.

"This safety notice addresses continuing incidents where gangway failures have resulted in unexpected retraction without adequate warning to operators or personnel crossing between platforms. Workers have been left unable to move to safety or brace for sudden movement when systems fail."

Under the requirements, dutyholders must conduct technical risk assessments of all automatic gangway functions. Control systems must only allow auto-retraction when personnel are confirmed safe. The use of gangway operators to manually override automatic retractions requires rigorous risk assessment.

The HSE emphasises that adequate warning systems must provide advance notice before dangerous events occur.

Howard added: "A warning by definition is advanced notice that a potentially dangerous event is about to occur. The purpose of the warning is to enable persons to make themselves safe before the event occurs. Audible and/or visual alarms that are triggered at the same time the gangway retracts are not considered to provide adequate warning to enable workers to reach safety."

Dutyholders must review their gangway design, including the testing that has been carried out of all automatic functions. They should carry out a suitable and sufficient technical risk assessment to understand all operational states of the control system under which the gangway may auto-retract, including that the control system will only result in auto-retraction if personnel are not at risk. Use of gangway operators to override auto-retractions should be rigorously risk assessed.

The safety notice can be viewed at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/safetybulletins/motion-compensated-gangways-auto-retraction.htm>

Further guidance on offshore health and safety law, risk assessment and equipment safety is available on the HSE website:

- [Offshore health and safety law](#)
- [Managing risks and risk assessment at work](#)
- [Equipment and machinery safety](#)

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. HSE issued a previous safety notice relating to the risk of serious injury from motion compensated gangways in 2024 – [HSE Safety Notice ED02-2024 Risk of serious injury from motion compensated gangways](#).
3. Relevant legal documents:
 - [The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 \(Application outside Great Britain\) Order 2013](#)
 - The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. [General duties of employers to their employees](#) and [General duties of employers and self-employed to persons other than their employees](#)
 - [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Regulation 3: Risk Assessment](#)
 - The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. Regulation 4: [Suitability of work equipment](#), Regulation 5: [Maintenance](#), Regulation 6: [Inspection](#) and Regulation 11: [Dangerous parts of machinery](#)
 - [The Work at Height Regulations 2005](#)