

# Groundworks contractor fined for cable strike

A groundworks contractor, G&R Groundworks (South East) Ltd, has been fined after an operative struck an underground electricity cable resulting in multiple serious burn injuries.

Folkestone Magistrates' Court heard that, on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018, G&R Groundworks (South East) Ltd operatives were using an electric ground breaker to dig fence post holes for a car park perimeter fence at a Cummins Power Generation site in Ramsgate, Kent.



While operating the electric breaker, one of the operatives struck an 11kv electricity cable causing a large flash and engulfing him in flames. The operative sustained serious burns to his face, chest, abdomen, groin, both arms and both legs, amounting to approximately 50% total body surface area burns.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that G&R Groundworks (South East) Ltd failed to source and refer to the underground services plans prior to breaking the ground to determine the location of any cables within the planned working area. They also failed to provide their operatives with cable identification equipment to further locate any cables within that area.

G&R Groundworks (South East) Ltd of St Lawrence Avenue, Ramsgate, Kent, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 25 (4) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and was fined £32,400 and ordered to pay costs of £2,657.18.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Ross Carter said "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"If a suitable safe system of work was followed prior to the incident, the life changing injuries sustained by the operative would have been prevented.

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

**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. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

The post [Groundworks contractor fined for cable strike](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

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## **Fitter sentenced for unregistered gas work**

A gas fitter has been sentenced for carrying out gas work after his registration with Gas Safe Register had lapsed.

Mansfield Magistrates' Court heard that, during September and October 2016, Adam Mansbridge replaced the gas central heating boilers at two different addresses in Mansfield and Worksop without being registered with Gas Safe Register. Following concerns, Gas Safe Register attended the properties and identified various defects with the installations, including defects identified as being 'immediately dangerous' and 'at risk'.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed that Mr Mansbridge's registration with Gas Safe Register had not been renewed at the time the gas work involving replacing the gas central heating boilers was carried out.

Adam Mansbridge of Thorpe Close, Coddington, Newark, pleaded guilty to a breach of Regulation 3 (3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998). He was given a curfew order for 12 weeks, ordered to pay costs of £2,500, and to pay £500 compensation to one of the customers.

Speaking after the hearing, HM inspector Lee Greatorex said:

"All gas work must be carried out by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life. Appropriate enforcement action will be taken by HSE against those that fall below the required standards."

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## **Unregistered gas engineer sentenced for carrying out gas work**

A gas engineer has been sentenced after carrying out gas work at a GP Practice and domestic premises without being registered with Gas Safe Register.

Mansfield Magistrates' Court heard that, between November 2015 and April 2017, Neil Hawkins carried out unsafe gas work at a GP Practice and two domestic properties in Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Mansfield, whilst not registered with Gas Safe Register.

Registration with Gas Safe Register requires engineers to demonstrate that they hold the relevant competencies and qualifications for the work they intend to carry out, ensuring that gas work is carried out to an appropriate standard and the public are not put at risk of serious harm.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed that Mr Hawkins had fraudulently issued Landlord Gas Safety Records for both properties, and a Gas Safety Inspection report for the GP practice using the details of a Gas Safe registered engineer unknown to him.

Neil Hawkins of Welbeck Street, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, pleaded guilty to one breach of Regulation 3(3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (as amended), and one breach of Regulation 3(7) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (as amended) at each

property. He was sentenced to 20 weeks imprisonment for each offence to run concurrently, suspended for 12 months. He was also ordered to carry out 120 hours of community service and to pay costs of £4,345.04.

Speaking after the hearing, HM Inspector Aaron Rashad said:

“Neil Hawkins undertook gas work which he knew he was not registered to do. All gas work must be done by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life.”

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## **Building company fined after staircase collapse seriously injures worker**

A Keighley building company has been fined after a sub-contractor fell into a basement following the collapse of a staircase.

Bolton Crown Court heard that on 26 April 2016, David Walsh, a 59-year-old sub-contractor was working on the refurbishment of a flooded basement at a site in Bolton when the staircase he used to access the basement collapsed. As a result of the fall Mr Walsh suffered three fractured vertebrae.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Rombalds Builders Ltd did not have a safe system of work in place and had failed to induct sub-contractors about the staircase, part of which had been removed leaving it structurally dangerous. The company also failed to provide suitable and sufficient edge protection at the top of the staircase which was situated next to the site welfare facilities.

Rombalds Builders Ltd, of Station Works, Parwood Street, Keighley pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £16,000 with costs of £16,561.50.

HSE inspector Seve Gomez-Aspron said after the hearing:

"These injuries could have been avoided by properly planning the work and managing the risk on site and making the site secure. 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, so it is important that the risks are managed properly and this is why we take action when failings are identified."

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## **Dairy farm fined after employee permanently blinded by disinfectant chemicals**

Beechdean Farm Limited has been fined following an incident in which an employee was permanently blinded by corrosive chemicals used in cleaning.

High Wycombe Magistrates' Court heard that in August 2017, an employee was cleaning the walls of the dairy farm at Old House Farm in North Dean, Buckinghamshire, using a corrosive disinfectant DM CiD, which contains potassium hydroxide. The pump sprayer being used unexpectedly developed a fault and ruptured into the face of the employee. His face became covered in the caustic and corrosive disinfectant, rendering him permanently blind in both eyes.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Beechdean Farm Limited failed to plan and supervise the use of chemicals for cleaning the dairy and did not have effective emergency arrangements in place.

Beechdean Farm Limited of North Dean, Buckinghamshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and has been fined £8,000 and ordered to pay costs of £11,879.94.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Stephen Faulkner said "While it was possible for both the pump sprayer and the chemical to be used for cleaning, this incident could so easily have been avoided by implementing correct control measures, safe working practices and appropriate emergency arrangements.

"Agriculture is an industry with a high accident rate, and the chemicals and activity involved in this incident are common in dairy farming, so this case should send a message to farms about the dangers of working with chemicals.

"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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