

# [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.”

## **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>

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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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## **University fined after research workers exposed to risk of suffering adverse health effects**

The University of Edinburgh has been fined for its failings which led to animal research workers, who were already sensitised to laboratory animal allergens (LAA), being at risk of suffering from adverse health effects as a result of exposure to LAA.

Edinburgh Sheriff Court heard how the researchers both began work at the University of Edinburgh in 2003. Both declared that they were already allergic to rodents around the time of taking up these positions. Over the years both continued to work with rats and were exposed to various levels of LAA, a respiratory sensitiser and a substance hazardous to health.



An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that The University of Edinburgh failed to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments of the exposure to LAA, particularly when it was known that the research workers were already sensitised to LAA. They failed to ensure suitable health surveillance was carried out at regular intervals (not more than 12 months apart) and that sufficient information, instruction, supervision and training was provided to the research workers.

The University of Edinburgh of Chambers Street, Edinburgh pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2 and Section 33 (1) (a) of the Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974 and was fined £10,000.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Susan Donnelly said: "This was a case of the University completely failing to grasp the importance of risk-based health surveillance.

"If the University had implemented a system of risk-based health surveillance, it would have ensured that an Occupational Health Management system was in place which would monitor worker's fitness for work. Such systems can prevent an employee's health condition becoming severe and life altering."

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## [Farm equipment manufacturer fined after employee's arm pulled into lathe](#)

A company has been fined after a worker was injured when his arm was pulled into a metalworking lathe.

Chelmsford Magistrates' Court heard how in January 2018, an employee was using emery cloth to hand-polish a workpiece, as it was being rotated on a Colchester Mascot 1600 manual lathe at the site in Woodbridge, Suffolk. The employee was wearing gloves when he got caught on the rotating chuck, causing his arm to be pulled into the machine. As a result, his arm became fractured in four places.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed that employees were not provided with the necessary training, information or instructions to carry out this work in a safe manner. There was no risk assessment, nor company policy on the dangers of using emery cloth or wearing gloves while operating a lathe. Furthermore, the lathe was in operation without an emergency stop fitted to the machine.

Richard Western Limited of Woodbridge, Suffolk, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company has been fined £50,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,717.19.

After the hearing HSE inspector Eleanor Kinman said: "This injury was easily preventable, and the risk should have been identified by the company. It was common practice to polish workpieces in the way the employee was doing, and to wear gloves whilst operating the lathes.

“Operatives and companies should be aware that emery cloth should never be applied directly by hand on a lathe, and that the wearing of gloves increases the risk of entanglement and is never acceptable near rotating parts of machinery. “Employers must properly assess and apply effective control measures to minimise the risk whilst operating machinery.”

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4. Guidance on how to do it safely can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/eis2.pdf>

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## [Haulage company fined after worker injured by moving vehicle](#)

A haulage company has been fined following an incident where a warehouse operative was injured at its business premises at Snetterton, Norfolk.

Chelmsford Magistrates’ Court heard that on 22 March 2018, whilst working in Foulger Transport Limited’s hub warehouse, Martin Shepherd was struck by a moving forklift truck and knocked to the ground. Before the vehicle came to a stop Mr Shepherd’s foot became trapped under the wheel, breaking bones in the upper part of the foot.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Foulger Transport Limited, a part of the Kinaxia Logistics group of companies had failed to have in place appropriate systems to ensure that vehicles and

pedestrians moved around the warehouse in a safe manner. Recent changes to the warehouse layout had not been considered in the company's assessment of risk and the warehouse team were relied upon to work safely with each other without effective training and supervision

Foulger Transport Limited, of The Circuit, Snetterton, Norfolk pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1), by virtue of regulation 17(1), of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,724.05.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Saffron Turnell said:

"This incident could easily have been avoided had appropriate systems been put in place to suitably separate the fork lift trucks and pedestrians.

"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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