

April 2025 – A roundup of HSE's top stories

April saw a number of significant stories from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), with multiple major prosecutions, including the workplace regulator bringing one of its most complex and lengthy investigations to a conclusion resulting in a £6million fine.

We also prosecuted a health board in Wales, a large chemical manufacturing company, as well as a local council after a man was seriously injured installing a Christmas tree.

And HSE was involved in the prosecution of a former police officer, who was jailed for more than ten years after the deaths of four paddleboarders.

Council fined for multiple failures on Guided Busway

Cambridgeshire County Council was fined £6 million after pleading guilty to serious [safety failings on its Guided Busway](#) that led to three deaths and multiple injuries over a ten-year period.

The prosecution follows a long and complex Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation, where incidents continued to happen despite regular enforcement action from the regulator.



The council chose to appeal enforcement action instead of acting on concerns.

You can read more here: [Council fined for multiple failures on Guided Busway – HSE Media Centre](#)

Health Board fined for failing to manage patients risk of falling

We started off the month by prosecuting [Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board](#), who was fined £250,000 following failures relating to patient falls in its hospitals.

Three elderly patients sustained falls in 2022 and 2023, all of which

resulted in fatalities. The cause of death of two of them was identified as being as a direct result of falling.

Richard Hughes, 84 and Gwilym Williams, 74, fell at Ysybty Gwynedd in Bangor in January and June 2022 respectively, while Nancy Read, who was 93, fell at Wrexham Maelor Hospital in January 2023.

You can read more about this case here: [Health Board fined for failing to manage patients risk of falling – HSE Media Centre](#).

Paddleboard tour leader jailed over deaths of four people

A paddleboard business owner [was jailed for 10 years and six months](#) for gross negligence manslaughter following the deaths of four people in 2021.

Nerys Lloyd, 39, from Aberavon, who was the owner and sole director of Salty Dog Co Ltd, was charged with the gross negligence manslaughter of Paul O'Dwyer, 42, Andrea Powell, 41, Morgan Rogers, 24, and Nicola Wheatley, 40, following their tragic deaths following the incident in Haverfordwest Town Weir on 30 October 2021.



Nerys Lloyd has been jailed for 10 years and six months

A joint investigation by Dyfed-Powys Police and HSE found that Lloyd was not correctly qualified to lead a stand-up paddle board river tour.

You can read more here: [Paddleboard tour leader jailed over deaths of four people – HSE Media Centre](#)

Council fined after man falls while installing town's Christmas tree

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council was fined £200,000 after a man was injured while installing the town's Christmas tree.

Council employee James Lyth was using a scissor lift to straighten the 20-foot tall Christmas tree when it toppled over with him still in the basket.



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Working at height remains one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death and HSE has detailed guidance on [working safely at height](#).

You can read more about the case here: [Council fined after man falls while installing town's Christmas tree – HSE Media Centre](#)

Company fined £2.5m following uncontrolled acid releases

A chemical manufacturing company was [fined £2.5m following two incidents of uncontrolled releases](#) of highly corrosive acids at its site in West Thurrock, Essex.

Industrial Chemicals Ltd pleaded guilty following the incidents in 2020, one of which caused the release of a hydrogen chloride gas cloud that resulted in schools in the area to close.



CCTV footage shows the atmosphere being engulfed in the cloud within 60 seconds

That incident saw the release of three hundred thousand litres of hydrochloric acid via poorly maintained pipework. As it came into contact with the atmosphere, this created a hydrogen chloride gas cloud which spread to nearby towns.

You can read more here: [Company fined £2.5m following uncontrolled acid releases – HSE Media Centre](#)

Defence company fined £800,000 after man shot on MoD range

[A defence technology company was fined £800,000](#) after an employee was shot during testing of ammunition at a Ministry of Defence (MoD) range in South Wales.

The father-of-two was left paralysed below the shoulders after being shot by a 5.56mm bullet fired from a gun, 570 metres away.



The bullet was fired from a gun more than 500 metres away

The incident happened on 25 March 2021 during a NATO ammunition quality assurance trial at the MoD Ranges in Pendine.

You can read the full story here: [Defence company fined £800,000 after man shot on MoD range – HSE Media Centre](#)

Builder sentenced for unlicensed asbestos removal

A builder was fined after carrying out [unlicensed asbestos removal work](#) at a house in Cheadle, Manchester.

Gavin Mutch, trading as G Mutch Developments, had been contracted to carry out renovations at the property including roofing work.

Despite being warned by the customer that asbestos was potentially present in the fascia boards, Mr Mutch proceeded to remove the asbestos-containing materials on 8 September 2022.

Our investigation found Mr Mutch had carried out unlicensed and therefore illegal asbestos removal work. This type of work should only be undertaken by a licensed asbestos contractor with appropriate safety controls in place.

You can read more here: [Builder sentenced for unlicensed asbestos removal –](#)

April is Stress Awareness Month: tackle stress in the workplace with five steps in five weeks

During April, Britain's bosses were invited to follow five simple steps to [prevent and reduce stress in their workplace](#).

Over the course of the month, employers were encouraged to focus on one of the campaign's 5 Rs for each of the five weeks. They are: to **Reach out** and have conversations, **Recognise** the signs and causes of stress, **Respond** to any risks you've identified, **Reflect** on actions you've agreed and taken, and make it **Routine**.

You can read more here: [April is Stress Awareness Month: tackle stress in the workplace with five steps in five weeks – HSE Media Centre](#)

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. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
3. 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](#).

[Fine for company and director after employee dies from fall through roof](#)

- HSE guidance says all work at height must be properly planned

A cladding company and its director have been fined following the death of a worker who fell through a fragile roof whilst replacing cladding panels.

The 61-year-old was working for Camclad Contractors Limited, replacing cladding panels on a former abattoir that had been damaged in a storm, when the incident took place at Gaerwen Industrial Estate, Anglesey, on 24 January 2018.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the work had only been planned from photographs and that no site visit had taken place before starting the work. The dimensions of the building were not known to

the contractor. This meant the cherry picker hired to allow safe access to height did not reach all parts of the structure that were to be repaired.

To complete the work, workers had to leave the safety of the cherry picker basket and used boards found on site to work on the fragile roof. It was whilst doing this that slipped and fell through the fragile roof, landing on the concrete floor below.

Employers and those in control of any work at height activity must make sure work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people. HSE has guidance on [working at height](#) which includes using the right type of equipment for working at height.

Speaking after the case HSE principal inspector Damian Corbett said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information and instruction to their workers in the safe system of working.

"If the work had been adequately planned, it would have provided a suitable safe system of work and prevented the risk of falls through fragile materials. Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those who fall below the required standards."

Camclad Contractors Limited of Wyboston Lakes, Great North Road, Wyboston, Bedfordshire pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and been fined £225,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000.

A director of the company, Dominic Lakeman-Pettit also of Great North Road, Wyboston, Bedfordshire pleaded guilty to breaching section 37(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was sentenced to four months in prison suspended for 12 months and ordered to carry out 200 hours unpaid work. He was also ordered to pay costs of £1,000.

Notes to Editors

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Innovative workplace safety designs win MSD risk reduction awards

Two UK companies have been honoured for their innovative workplace safety designs that reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in their operations.

Ainscough Crane Hire has won the **MSD Risk Reduction through Design Award 2024/25**, while **UPM Raflatac Ltd** has received the **Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) Recognition Award**. Both awards, **sponsored by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors (CIEHF)**, were presented at CIEHF's annual awards ceremony on 28 April 2025.

Ainscough Crane Hire developed a specialised brake and hub assembly tool set that eliminates the need for workers to manually handle heavy components weighing up to 52kg during crane maintenance. Previously, plant fitters had to adopt awkward postures in restricted spaces beneath crane wheel arches, placing significant stress on their lower backs.

"Taking the strain out of crane maintenance has been a priority for us," said an Ainscough Crane Hire spokesperson.

"Our maintenance and engineering colleagues collaborated to design a solution that eliminates the need to handle brake and hub assembly components."

A worker at Ainscough Crane Hire added: "The new tools mean brake inspections are much easier to carry out. There is no need to lift the heavy drums by hand, which previously took two people."

UPM Raflatac Ltd, based in Scarborough, created an ingenious trolley system for handling heavy paper reels weighing between 20kg and 90kg. The solution was proposed by a worker to eliminate manual lifting and stacking of offcut reels.

"Our solution was truly collaborative," said a UPM Raflatac spokesperson. "A worker proposed an initial idea, and our in-house production and engineering departments worked together to design a solution that would transform our handling processes."

Chris Quarrie, Chartered Ergonomist and Human Factors specialist and chair of this year's judging panel, said: "We applaud both Ainscough Crane Hire and UPM Raflatac for their contributions towards reducing workplace MSD risks to their workers. These awards demonstrate how MSD risks can be designed out of daily work activities."

Iris Mynott from CIEHF added: "Through these recognitions, we highlight the impactful contributions of businesses in advancing workplace safety. Congratulations to our winners and all the entrants for their dedication to ergonomic improvements."

For further details on the winners and their innovative designs, visit:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/msd-awards.htm>

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2. More information about Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors (CIEHF) can be found here: <https://ergonomics.org.uk/>.
3. 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.
4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>.

Company fined after death of man whose life was 'unjustly cut short'

A construction company has been fined after a kitchen fitter was crushed to death by a pack of concrete blocks at a site in the Cotswolds.

Martin Dunford, who was 33, was 'very much loved' by his family who say they miss him 'every day' since the incident on 23 January 2020. Martin, from Pocklington in Yorkshire, was killed after being pinned against the side of a lorry loader as two stacks of concrete blocks fell onto him.



Martin Dunford was killed while working on a construction site in the

Cotswolds

Martin's sister, Tracey Hunter, provided a statement on behalf of his family.

She said: "Martin went to work and never came home. His life was unjustly cut short.

"Little did he know on that date that he was going to work on a site that had ongoing issues and was not following HSE guidelines for working safely on a construction site.

"Martin was very much loved by his family and friends. He is missed every day and nothing can ever fill the hole that is left by him no longer being here.

"We, his family, and friends are still all navigating throughout this endless period of grief and today's verdict is the start of some sense of justice towards his senseless death."

Martin had been working at Ebrington Rise, near Chipping Campden – a development of 16 three, four and five bedroomed houses being built by Piper Homes Construction Limited.



Martin Dunford was crushed when two stacks of concrete blocks fell on top of him

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Martin had walked around a lorry loader to talk to a driver about how long he would be on site, as he needed access to one of the properties being built. A stack of concrete blocks which had been placed on top of another stack of blocks, which was also supported by a wooden pallet, toppled over onto him, pinning him against the side of the lorry. He sustained severe internal and head injuries and died on site.

Piper Homes Construction Limited, who were the principal contractor on the site, had failed to ensure that a suitable, level storage area was provided for the safe offloading of construction materials. The company had also failed to ensure that wooden pallets in a suitable condition were used for

the storage of construction materials and that persons were excluded from delivery areas. [HSE guidance on pallet safety](#) is available.

Piper Homes Construction Limited, which is currently in liquidation, of Lace Market Square, Nottingham, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015. The company was fined £300,000 and ordered to pay £5,236 in costs at Cheltenham Magistrates Court on 29 April 2025.



The company had also failed to ensure that wooden pallets in a suitable condition were used for the storage of construction materials

HSE inspector James Lucas said: "This was an entirely avoidable incident and our thoughts remain with Martin's family.

"Storage of construction materials should be properly planned and managed, to ensure that if materials are stored at height the necessary measures are in place to prevent them from falling and potentially injuring persons.

"Storage areas should be level and accessories such as wooden pallets should be regularly inspected to ensure that they are in suitable condition to be used to store materials.

"Had this been done on this particular site, Martin would have returned home safely to his family."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Arfaq Nabi and paralegal officer Jason Dix

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Farmer fined following death of worker

A Gloucestershire farmer has been fined after the shepherdess he employed was killed in a quad bike crash.

Laura Simmons, was working alone on 2nd June 2023, spraying weed killer along fence lines, using the all-terrain vehicle (ATV) at a farm in Charlton Abbots near Cheltenham.

The overloaded quad bike overturned. The 22-year-old was found by a jogger several hours later.

Laura, described by her mother as “lively, caring and adventurous,” died from fatal spine injuries. An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the ATV overturned due to an overloaded front rack, uneven tyre pressure, unstable load from lack of baffles in the spray tank and the potential for the spray lance to be used during movement.



Laura, described by her mother as “lively, caring and adventurous”

Toby Baxter failed to provide suitable equipment, ensure pre-use checks were conducted, implement a system to fill the spray tank, formally train his employees and properly assess the risks.

Laura's mother paid tribute to her daughter from Shetland, saying: "She was a lively person who loved animals, was very caring, was a hard worker, was plucky, intelligent, practical, adventurous and she had a beautiful smile."

HSE guidelines emphasise that safety checks for ATVs must include checking tyre pressures, which are crucial for vehicle stability. Even a small 1 psi difference can cause dangerous control problems. Proper ATV operation requires appropriate training, suitable helmets, and careful route planning. The risk of overturn is significantly higher when carrying loads that destabilise the vehicle, especially on uneven terrain or slopes as these conditions require reduced loads and increased caution.

[Guidance on safe use of all-terrain vehicles \(ATVs\) in agriculture and forestry](#) can be found on HSE website.

Toby Baxter, of Chedworth pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety At Work Act 1974. He was fined £1,000 and ordered to pay £6161.72 costs at a hearing at Cheltenham Magistrates Court on 29th April 2025.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Emily O'Neill said: "This was a tragic incident, and a much-loved young woman has lost her life. It could have easily been avoided with the right controls in place.

"We found several failures, so Mr Baxter's previous suggestion that Laura was a victim of 'unfortunate circumstances' is, frankly, offensive.

"This prosecution highlights ongoing safety concerns in the agricultural sector, which remains one of Britain's most dangerous industries for workers. Proper equipment, training and risk assessment are essential to protect workers."

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Arfaq Nabi and supported by paralegal officer Rebecca Foreman.

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