

Window manufacturing company fined after worker seriously injures hand

A window manufacturer has been fined £100,000 after a teenage worker had two fingers severed by a cross-cutting saw.

The 19-year-old was working for Ford Windows Limited at the company's site in Sheffield when the incident occurred.

He had loaded a cross-cut saw with a length of windowsill, which had been stored outside in the rain. As he went to cut the windowsill, his hand slipped off the wet workpiece into the unguarded part of the blade, resulting in severing parts of two fingers on his left hand.



The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that the company had not conducted a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the cross-cut saw, failed to identify the need to adjust the nose guard of the saw to minimise the amount of blade exposed, and failed to identify the need to dry the materials before cutting.

The investigation also found that the company also failed to provide suitable information, instruction, and training to employees on working safely for this activity.

Guidance on the machinery safety, including maintaining machinery can be found on the HSE website: [Introduction to machinery safety – HSE](#)

Ford Windows Limited of Catley Road, Darnall, Sheffield pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and received a fine of £100,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4227.50.

After the hearing the HM principal inspector Chris Tilley commented: "The company failed in several areas, they had no competent person responsible for

health and safety at the site, they failed to conduct a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and therefore did not have a suitable safe system of work for the safe use of the saw, which left the nose guard of the saw incorrectly positioned.

“The company’s failure to risk assess meant that they could not communicate information, instruction, and training to their employees on how to use the saw safely.

“If the company had taken the time to risk assess the required controls, to safely use the cross-cut saw, they would have found that suitable measures could have been implemented for zero cost, as the guard was available on the machine and simply needed manually adjusting to guard the blade.”

The prosecution was bought by enforcement lawyer Arfaq Nabi assisted by paralegal officer Imogen Isaac.

Notes to Editors:

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](#).

Paddleboard tour leader jailed over deaths of four people

A paddleboard business owner has been 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.

She admitted all four charges on Wednesday, March 5, 2025, along with one count under the Health and Safety at Work Act.



Nerys Lloyd has been jailed for 10 years and six months

At her sentencing, the court heard how on 30 October 2021, Lloyd with the assistance of Paul O'Dwyer planned a trip organised through Lloyd's business.

However, there had been heavy flooding, and severe weather warnings were in place, which were not heeded by Lloyd. The river was running fast, and the weir was in an extremely hazardous condition. Lloyd did not check the weir or provide a safety briefing to the participants nor inform them of the presence of the weir. Despite this, Lloyd facilitated the paddleboarders entering the water and she led the group along the river.

As the group approached the weir, apart from Lloyd, all the participants were pulled over the top into its base and became trapped before being ejected from the weir. Four of the participants survived.

Instructor Mr O'Dwyer, who initially exited the river safely, re-entered the water in an attempt to rescue the others, but was immediately dragged over the top. The four victims died as a result of drowning/immersion.

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.



Haverfordwest Weir

Guidance and training for water sports instructors and participants is

available from national sport governing bodies including the British Stand-Up Paddle Association, British Canoeing and the British Kite Surfing Association. Anyone organising adventure activities for under-18s must be licenced by the Adventure Activities Licencing Authority.

HSE Inspector Helen Turner said: "I would like to express our sincere sympathy to the families of those who died, and to the survivors whose lives are indelibly affected.

"Four lives were needlessly lost and survivors traumatised by their experience at Haverfordwest weir.

"Nerys Lloyd was solely responsible for the decision to enter the water while the river was in flood, and for the attempt to take even inexperienced paddlers over the weir. This was completely reckless and the risk of death was foreseeable.

"The victims placed their trust in Lloyd to deliver a safe and enjoyable paddle, but through her incompetence, carelessness and complacency she failed to plan or assess the obvious risk at the weir or to take even basic safety measures. By not discussing the hazards on the route Lloyd robbed the participants of the opportunity to make a reasoned decision on their own participation on the day.

"Health and safety law is not a barrier to adventurous activities, which are enjoyed by people every day in safety. Organisers must take proportionate action to recognise and manage real risks."

Senior Investigating Officer Detective Superintendent Cameron Ritchie, of Dyfed-Powys Police, said: "Firstly, I would like to reiterate my heartfelt sympathies to the families of Paul, Andrea, Morgan and Nicola.

"The incident that took place in Haverfordwest on October 30, 2021, was an extremely tragic case resulting in the completely avoidable deaths of four people. We heard in court how this incident devastated four families, and we hope that lessons will be learned that prevent this from ever happening again.

"This has been a complex and extensive investigation and I'd like to thank my colleagues at Dyfed-Powys Police, The Health and Safety Executive and the Crown Prosecution Service for their professionalism and diligence to secure this outcome."

The HSE investigation and enforcement was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Kate Harney and Paralegal Officer Helen Jacob.

Notes to editors:

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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 guidance on managing health and safety for leisure and sporting activities can be found at [Basics for leisure activities](#).
5. Guidance on Adventure Activities Licensing can be found at [Adventure activities licensing – HSE](#).
6. 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](#).

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

- 20-foot tree toppled during Bury Market installation
- HSE has well-established guidance on safely working at height

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council has been 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.



The tree was being installed by an external company at Bury Market on 21 November 2022, in time for the town's annual festivities at Christmas shopping destination.

The 32-year-old operations manager suffered concussion and severe injuries to his right-hand side, including bruising to his ribs. He needed an operation to his leg and was left using a wheelchair and crutches after sustaining a large cut to his leg. Mr Lyth was off work for two months and was subsequently only able to return on restricted hours and duties as he continued his recovery.

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

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Bury Metropolitan Borough Council had failed to provide Mr Lyth with any training in the safe operation of the scissor lift and had failed carry out a sufficient risk assessment for this work activity.

The investigation also found that a suitable risk assessment of the work would have identified the dangers involved and the need to restrict the use of scissor lifts to those with appropriate training.

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council pleaded guilty to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The organisation was fined £200,000 and were ordered to pay costs at a hearing at Manchester Magistrates' Court on 2 April 2025.

HSE inspector Leanne Ratcliffe said: "This was a very serious incident.

"It is important for industry to understand the importance of a risk assessment and training when using elevated platforms. Access to these platforms should be limited to those trained and anyone who isn't trained shouldn't be allowed to use them.

"If this sort of work is not planned and controlled to a high degree, then there is a very high likelihood of a potentially fatal fall, or one resulting in very serious injury."

The prosecutions were supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Julian White and paralegal officer Hannah Snelling.

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to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).

5. Guidance on [working safely at height](#), and [with elevated platforms](#) is available.

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

A defence technology company has been 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 incident happened on 25 March 2021 during a NATO ammunition quality assurance trial at the MoD Ranges in Pendine.



The man was shot while in front of this target on the range

The now 42-year-old's role had been to check the impact of bullets on a metal target and was in front of the target when the bullet was fired.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found QinetiQ Limited had failed to adequately risk assess the trial activity. As a result they did not have adequate precautions in place to ensure that no one was near the target when the rounds were fired.

- Employers are required by law to protect both their employees and others from harm and assessing the risk is just one part of the overall process and [HSE guidance is available to explain what steps should be taken](#).

QinetiQ Limited of, Cody Technology Park, Ively Road, Farnborough, Hampshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety At Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £800,000 and ordered to pay £8,365 in costs at Llanelli Magistrates Court on 3 April 2025.



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

HSE principal specialist inspector Stuart Charles said of the employee: "His life and those of his wife and two children have been devastated by the severe injuries he has suffered.

"Simple and inexpensive steps could have been taken which would have prevented this incident.

"This case shows employers the importance of continually assessing the way they work and not just accepting historical practices."

The HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement Lawyer Julian White and paralegal officer Imogen Isaac.

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5. HSE guidance about [managing and assessing risks](#) is available.

Company fined £2.5m following uncontrolled acid releases

- Schools were closed following hydrochloric acid release
- Joint investigation and prosecution by HSE and the Environment Agency
- Guidance is available on maintaining equipment in large chemical plants

A chemical manufacturing company has been 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.

The first incident on 6 January 2020 resulted in an uncontrolled release of hydrochloric acid from three chemical storage tanks.

Three hundred thousand litres of the substance was released via poorly maintained pipework. As it came into contact with the atmosphere, this created a hydrogen chloride gas cloud which spread to nearby towns. Nearby CCTV footage shows the atmosphere being engulfed in the cloud within 60 seconds.



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

Local businesses were affected and schools in West Thurrock and Chafford Hundred were advised to close. Due to the risk to local residents of exposure to the migrating fumes, advice was provided by emergency responders to close windows and doors.

Hydrochloric acid is highly corrosive and hydrogen chloride is a toxic gas. The incident lasted approximately 24 hours.

On 29 August 2020 another uncontrolled release, this time of sulphuric acid, occurred due to a crack in a pipe. This resulted in the release of 87 cubic metres of sulphuric acid being released into the atmosphere. The valve that

was designed to control leaks in the event of cracks did not operate as intended, leading to the uncontrolled release, increasing the risks to operators and delivery drivers.

Sulphuric acid is highly corrosive and can cause lung damage if high levels are breathed in.

A joint investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Environment Agency (EA) into the release of the hydrochloric acid in January 2020 found that pipework had not been installed, maintained and inspected sufficiently which led to several smaller pipe failures before the more serious loss of containment. The investigation found that pipework had not been properly maintained, and a protective chemical-resistant coating had not been applied to the full height of containment walls.

An investigation by HSE into the release of sulphuric acid in August 2020 identified a lack of inspection and maintenance of the pipework and valves. The leak continued for a further two days due to the inability to operate a manual valve to stop the process. The loss of containment was eventually stopped on 31 August 2020. Fortunately, no one was harmed.

Both HSE and industry guidance highlight that work equipment must be maintained in efficient working order and in good repair. Work equipment includes the defective valve and pipework at the site. Suitable and sufficient inspection and maintenance regimes for pipework and valves significantly reduces the likelihood of the loss of containment of dangerous substances to protect both employees, other workers and members of the public from potential harm.

In relation to the January 2020 incident:

- Industrial Chemicals Limited of Old Power Station site, Stoneness Road, West Thurrock, Grays, Essex, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 for the loss of containment of hydrochloric acid.
- Industrial Chemicals Limited also pleaded guilty to two charges of breaching environmental permit conditions in contravention of regulation 38(2) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 in that the company did not take appropriate measures to minimise the risk of unauthorised emissions of hydrochloric acid/acid fumes to air and land with the potential to impact receptors offsite including the local community.

In relation to the August 2020 incident:

- Industrial Chemicals Limited pleaded guilty to Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

In a hearing at Westminster Combined Court last week (Friday 28 March), the company was fined £2.4 million in relation to charges under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and a further £100,000 in relation to charges under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

HSE principal inspector Maria Strangward said: "The uncontrolled release of significant quantities of hazardous substances in these cases was entirely avoidable.

"An appropriate planned maintenance programme should have been in place to ensure that pipes do not fail, and valves operate. The proactive maintenance of pipework and safety critical valves is extremely important at sites such as these.

"Industrial Chemicals Limited's West Thurrock site is classified as an upper tier site under the Control of Major Accident Regulations 2015, so that businesses and communities are protected, and potential major accidents avoided."

Adrian Sherman, Environment Agency regulatory officer, said: "The Environment Agency takes its regulatory responsibilities seriously to protect communities and the environment.

"We expect businesses to comply with their environmental permits and will take appropriate enforcement action when they fail to do so. In this case, an appropriate inspection and maintenance programme could have prevented an environmental and public health risk."

The HSE prosecution was brought by enforcement lawyer Samantha Wells, who said: "At the sentencing hearing the judge noted the previous history of poor health and safety standards by this defendant, which included previous incidents relating to poor maintenance of pipework at this site showing a careless attitude to health and safety which was treated as an aggravating factor which uplifted the sentence imposed."

The EA prosecution was brought by EA lawyer Laura King.

Further information:

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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. Relevant guidance can be found at: [Safe use of work equipment. Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. Approved Code of Practice and guidance – L22](#) and [A guide to the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations \(COMAH\) 2015 – L111](#)
5. 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](#).

About the Environment Agency:

1. The Environment Agency is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
2. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. Where businesses fail to meet their obligations, the Environment Agency takes appropriate enforcement action, ranging from guidance and advice to prosecution. Our enforcement work helps ensure a level playing field for legitimate businesses and prevents environmental harm.
3. Industries with potential to pollute must operate under permits with strict conditions to protect the environment and local communities.
4. For more information visit www.gov.uk/environment-agency.