

# Farm partnership fined after man with 'heart of gold' killed by exploding tyre

A Lancashire farm partnership has been fined £80,000 after a man with 'a heart of gold' died following an incident at a dairy farm in Hutton near Preston.

Joshua Hardman, who was just 23, suffered fatal head injuries as he helped to inflate a tractor tyre at the farm on 7 May 2021. The father of one from Longridge, was working as a farmhand at the farm run by W Hesketh and Sons.

At the time of the incident, Joshua had been helping one of the partners in the business, Bill Hesketh, re-seat and inflate a large tractor tyre. As Mr Hesketh inflated the inner tube within the tyre, it suddenly exploded and the catastrophic release of compressed air propelled the wheel rim into Joshua, causing traumatic head injuries. He was taken to hospital and underwent skull and brain surgeries, but he subsequently passed away on 11 June after a further deterioration in his condition.

- Tyre removal, replacement and inflation should only be tackled by competent staff and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) [guidance is available](#).

In a statement, his family said: "Joshua was a very loving, caring, kind and gentle person. He had a heart of gold.

"He was also an amazing dad, and it is heart-breaking that he will never reach his full potential in that role.

"His five-year-old daughter will miss out on a great deal of love and affection and the role he would have played in her life."



Joshua Hardman and his daughter Bonneigh

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that W Hesketh and Sons had failed to properly assess and plan this work activity. They also failed to identify and put in place the measures necessary to control the risks involved when inflating large commercial tyres.

The investigation also found that the risk of an explosion was much higher because the tyre, wheel rim and inner tube were all in a poorly maintained condition. A suitable and sufficient assessment had not been made to determine whether the damaged tyre, inner tube and wheel rim were suitable to be inflated safely.

W Hesketh and Sons, of Grange Lane, Hutton, Preston, pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 2(1) of the Health and Safety At Work Act 1974. They were fined £80,000 and ordered to pay £8,605 costs at a hearing at Preston Magistrates Court on 4 February 2025.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Anthony Banks said: "This was a tragic incident, and a much-loved young man has lost his life. It could have easily been avoided with the right controls in place.

"HSE would like to make all employers aware that, before they undertake the inflation of large commercial tyres, they need to have correctly assessed the risk and have in place the suitable controls for the task."

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski and supported by paralegal officer Rebecca Foreman.

#### **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.
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5. HSE guidance on [working safely with tyres](#) is available.

# Company fined for failures at waste and recycling centre

A company that operates several household waste and recycling centres in Wales has been fined for failing to protect workers and members of the public.

Sundorne Products (Llanidloes) Limited pleaded guilty to the failures identified at Llandrindod Wells Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Powys. The charges arose following an inspection by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on 6 October 2022.



A HSE inspector identified unrestricted access to the controls and to dangerous parts of the machines

A HSE inspector identified a risk of serious injury to both workers and the public. Action was taken to stop the use of three waste compactor machines due to there being unrestricted access to the controls and to dangerous parts of the machines, namely the compaction chambers.

HSE guidance, including information on the various safety hazards, is freely available on HSE's [waste management and recycling webpages](#).

Further enforcement action was taken to secure improvements in the management arrangements and improved control measures.



The failures were identified at Llandrindod Wells Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Powys

A subsequent HSE investigation identified that the risks associated with the compactors operation had not been adequately assessed and there was no clear instruction or training provided to workers. The pre-use checks were considered inadequate and there was no recognised safe method of clearing blockages within the compaction chambers.

Sundorne Products (Llanidloes) Limited of Potter House, Henfaes Lane, Welshpool, Powys, pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,077 at a hearing at Welshpool Magistrates Court on 28 January 2025.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Joe Boast said, “Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of working. The charges extend to failings in respect of risks to the public”.

“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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## **Sheffield skip hire boss avoids immediate spell behind bars**

The director of a Sheffield-based skip hire company has avoided an immediate

spell behind bars after being found guilty of multiple breaches of health and safety law.

Following an investigation and subsequent prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Jamie White, the director of M White (Skips) Limited, was given an eight month custodial sentence, suspended for a period of 12 months. His company was fined £65,000.

Both White and his company appeared at Sheffield Magistrates Court on 23 January 2025 to be sentenced, the same court where they had been found guilty of several charges brought by the HSE following a five day trial in October last year.



The piles of waste found by HSE inspectors at the company's site in Sheffield

HSE has detailed guidance on [waste management and recycling](#) including about how it should be safely [sorted and processed](#).

The court heard that HSE inspectors visited the company's site on Worthing Road in the Attercliffe area of Sheffield, on 8 August 2022, after receiving multiple reports of poor conditions both there and along the public highway. When inspectors arrived, they found skips loaded with waste material stacked along the public highway and piles of other waste preventing workers from safely moving around the site, as well as blocking access to welfare facilities, including the staff toilets.

Immediate action was taken by HSE, with prohibition notices being issued preventing any further stacking of the already loaded skips. However, a follow-up visit less than a month later found no improvements had been made – as well as evidence the enforcement action had been ignored.



HSE received multiple reports of poor conditions both there and along the public highway

Subsequent enquiries found the company did not hold Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance), a legal requirement for employers. Further prohibition notices were served, including the prevention of hand sorting of waste materials from skips on the public pavement due to the obvious risks to members of public trying to walk past.

The subsequent HSE investigation found there had been a steep decline in general health and safety standards at the firm, giving rise to significant risk to employees and members of the public. With no effective health and safety management and an apparent loss of control over general conditions, there had been no attempt to reduce the risk from hazards on site to safeguard employees. The company, and White, failed to comply with the law, despite enforcement notices being served requiring action to be taken.



Piles of waste prevented workers from safely moving around the site

M White (Skips) Limited of Worthing Road, Attercliffe, Sheffield pleaded guilty to non-compliance with three Prohibition notices and to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and also Section 1(1) of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969. The Company was fined £65,000 and ordered to pay £13,280 in costs at a hearing at Sheffield Magistrates Court on 23 January 2025.

Jamie White, of Blonk Street Sheffield, Director of the company when HSE visited, pleaded guilty to non-compliance with two Prohibition notices and to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act

1974 by virtue of Section 37(1), and also Section 1(1) of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969. He was given an eight month custodial sentence, suspended for 12 months, and must complete 150 hours of unpaid work. He was also disqualified as a company director for a period of three years and ordered to pay £13,280 in costs.

After the hearing the HSE inspector Laura Hunter said: "As the sole director, Jamie White also worked on the site and was fully aware of the poor conditions which his employees were subjected to.

"Full skips were deposited and stored on the public highway, with employees later needing to use the street to sort through waste materials when the site became inaccessible.

"By law, employers are required to insure against liability for injury or disease to their employees arising out of their employment – it is compulsory insurance. Mr White failed to arrange for his company to obtain it for his workers, despite HSE serving an enforcement notice legally requiring him to do so.

"Companies should ensure that they understand and follow health and safety laws and guidance and act responsibly to protect both their employees and the public from the activities under their control."

The HSE prosecution was brought by senior enforcement lawyer James Towey and enforcement lawyer Kate Harney, supported by paralegal officer Imogen Isaac.

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5. HSE guidance on [waste management and recycling](#) and about how it should be safely [sorted and processed](#) is available.
6. HSE guidance for employers on [Employers' Liability Insurance](#) is also available.

# Manufacturing firm fined after workers struck by stone slabs

A manufacturing firm in Ipswich has been fined after two workers were struck by slabs of stone, with one of the men sustaining multiple bone fractures as a result.

Three slabs of quartz stone fell from a stillage onto Steven Constable and Struan Dunsmore while they worked at Bespoke Stone Ltd's workshop on Dales Road.

The pair, both from Ipswich, had been preparing to lift one of the slabs onto a saw bed when all three fell onto them on 17 June 2022.

After sustaining multiple bone fractures and soft tissue damage, Mr Constable has required a number of operations and has been unable to work for over two years. The 54-year-old sustained fractures to his right femur, hip, left tibia and foot. He has spent a total of 12 weeks in hospital.

Mr Dunsmore, 31, sustained bruising to his body and required time off from work following the incident.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found Bespoke Stone Ltd's handling and storage of slabs was unsafe in that the material was not secure. The restraint system provided did not fit around larger sizes of material. The company also failed to accurately report the injuries sustained by Mr Constable and the time taken off work by Mr Dunsmore under RIDDOR regulations.

HSE guidance states slabs should always remain restrained during loading/unloading operations, whether from vehicles or from storage when any person could be in the hazard zone into which a slab might fall from its racked position or fail during lifting. Further guidance can be found at: [Handling and storage of large sheet stone slabs – HSE](#)

Bespoke Stone Ltd, of Dales Road, Ipswich, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £6,600 and ordered to pay £4,875.40 in costs at Peterborough Magistrates' Court on 17 January 2025.

HSE inspector Jessica Flint said: "Bespoke Stone Ltd failed to grasp the importance of safe handling and storage of stone materials in stone masonry, with employees regularly working within the hazard zone of slabs during operations within its workshop.

"The CCTV footage makes clear how serious this incident was, with one of the employees sustaining a number of horrific injuries which have affected his ability to return to work. Companies should be aware that HSE will not

hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Matthew Reynolds and supported by HSE paralegal officer Melissa Wardle.

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5. CCTV footage can be found here: [CCTV footage – HSE v Bespoke Stone Ltd.mp4 – Google Drive](#)

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## **Repeated wood dust failures lands company with fine**

An Essex-based company that makes windows and doors has been hit with a £4,000 fine after repeatedly failing to protect its workers from exposure to wood dust.

Timbercraft Windows & Doors Limited, which also manufactures wooden conservatories, was visited by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on three occasions over a 12-year period.

Those visits, to the company's workshop on Severalls Industrial Park in Colchester, identified large build-ups of wood dust around machinery as well as other health and safety breaches. These included workers not being provided with suitable respiratory protective equipment (RPE).



The amount of wood dust on the premises put workers at risk

- Breathing in wood dust excessively can cause asthma and nasal cancer. Guidance on working in the [woodworking industry](#) is available an [inspection-led campaign to protect workers](#)

A subsequent HSE investigation found the company failed to adequately control and prevent its employee's exposure to wood dust in the following ways:

- inadequate local exhaust ventilation (LEV) and a failure to have its LEV thoroughly examined and tested within the preceding 14 months;
- failure to have employees face fit tested for their RPE;
- common dry sweeping of wood dust;
- using compressed air lines for clearing of wood dust from machines;
- using incorrect L class vacuums; and
- failure to have employees who were exposed to wood dust under health surveillance.



HSE inspectors visited Timbercraft Windows & Doors Limited three times over 12 years

For each of failures above the solutions are widely known in the woodworking industry:

- Health surveillance should be undertaken for employees exposed to wood dust; a system of on-going health checks to detect ill-health effects such as occupational asthma at an early stage.
- LEV in woodworking should be subject to a thorough examination and test by a competent person, no less frequent than every 14 months. It is a detailed and systematic examination sufficient to make sure the LEV can continue to perform as intended by design and will contribute to the adequate control of exposure.
- Adequate LEV will be dependent upon the process, however guidance sheets for control of wood dust at woodworking machines are available for free from the HSE website.
- Face fit testing is required for tight fitting RPE to ensure that it fits the wearers face and does not leak, as this would increase the wearers exposure.
- Wood dust should be cleared on a regular basis using a minimum of an M class vacuum. Dry sweeping and use of compressed air lines should not be used for clearing of wood dust as they create plumes of dust that can then be inhaled once again.

Following the December 2022 inspection, three improvement notices were served relating to control of wood dust. A further improvement notice was served relating to arrangements for monitoring, guarding and other protection devices on machinery.

Each visit by HSE inspectors during the past 12 years had resulted in improvement notices being issued, along with other action taken. However, despite this, the company still failed to act, including to provide its workers with suitable RPE.



Despite repeated visits from HSE the company failed to protect its own workers

Timbercraft Windows & Doors Limited, of Crowborough East Sussex, pleaded

guilty to breaching Regulation 9(2), 11(1) and 7(1) of Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.

The company was fined £4,000 and was ordered to pay £2,792 costs at a hearing at Colchester Magistrates Court on the 16 of January 2025.

HSE inspector Tom McQuade said: “Just seeing the piles of wood dust lying around gave us an indication of how much workers would have been exposed.

“The risks from exposure to wood dust are well known and exposure can cause irreparable harm.

“The fine imposed should highlight to employers in the woodworking industry that the courts and HSE, take failure to control exposure to harmful substances, such as wood dust, extremely seriously.

“Appropriate controls are well documented, and [guidance is provided free of charge](#) on the HSE website.

“Businesses need to protect their employee’s respiratory health. And if they don’t, we will not hesitate to take appropriate action.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by enforcement lawyer Arfaq Nabi and paralegal officer Helen Hugo.

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