

# “No-one is in charge of health and safety” – stone company fined after workshop floor covered in hazardous dust

- HSE inspectors left stunned by employee concerns
- HSE guidance on artificial stone dust recently updated

A company that manufactures popular stone kitchen worktops has been fined £60,000 after it repeatedly failed to protect workers from exposure to hazardous dust.

Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited Inova Stone Ltd nine times over a six year period, and found little or no improvement across several areas of concern.

HSE inspectors were left stunned after visiting the company’s premises in Slough in May 2021 when employees told them that ‘no-one is in charge of health and safety’. That visit had come about after concerns had been raised about unsafe working practices. Inspectors soon saw the complacency for themselves, after identifying several breaches of health and safety law, including a failure to control exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS).



The workshop floor was caked in dust, suggesting an absence of effective controls.

Stone worktops are becoming increasingly popular in home kitchens. Processing stone, including engineered stone, by cutting, chiselling and polishing, can create dust that contains airborne particle that carry RCS.



Shoe/boot prints are clearly visible in the dust on the workshop floor

RCS dust is invisibly fine and can reach deep inside the lung. It can cause permanent lung damage before symptoms develop. Stone workers are at risk of exposure to airborne particles of stone dust containing RCS, with the risk higher when exposure is prolonged and uncontrolled. Over time, breathing in these silica particles can cause irreversible, life-changing and often fatal respiratory conditions such as silicosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer.

- HSE recently updated its guidance for those working on stone worktops – including a helpful guide of do's and don'ts here: [HSE Guidance for those installing stone worktops](#).

As well as failing to protect workers from the potentially deadly dust, HSE inspectors also found Inova Stone Ltd routinely allowed them to use unguarded machinery. In addition, the company also had heavy stone slabs not being stored safely, putting workers at risk of serious injury.



Heavy stone slabs were not being stored safely

As a result of the inspection, the company was served with four improvement notices, with the resulting HSE investigation revealing similar action had also been taken four years earlier, in 2017.

Inova Stone Ltd of Willow Road, Colnbrook, Slough, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, as well as three charges for failure to comply with an improvement notice. The company was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay £7,363 costs at Staines Magistrates Court on 20 May 2025.

After the hearing, HSE Principal Inspector Karen Morris said: “Inova Stone Ltd failed to comply with legal notices requiring them to make improvements and repeatedly showed a lack of commitment to managing health and safety.

“We were stunned when employees told us that ‘no-one was in charge of health and safety’.

“After being provided with advice and guidance over several years, the company had plenty of opportunities to comply with the law, yet they consistently failed to do so.

“The fine imposed should send a clear message to employers that the risks from working with engineered stone must be taken extremely seriously.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyers Jayne Wilson and Rebecca Schwartz as well as paralegal Melissa Wardle.

#### **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. Updated [HSE guidance for those working on stone worktops](#) is available.
  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](#).
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# Two companies fined after worker injured in fall from height

- Working at height a leading cause of workplace injury and death, HSE guidance is available.

Two Shrewsbury-based companies have been fined after a worker fell through a roof during extension work on a house extension the town.

The injured man was one of several workers employed by Roofrite (Shropshire) Limited carrying out work on the roof of the property on 9 December 2022. The firm had been appointed by principal contractor Harding and Houlston Building Contractors Limited to install the roof on the property.

While working on the roof, the man accidentally stepped in an area where there was an opening for a window that was yet to be installed, resulting in him falling through and to the ground below. The suffered fractures to his spine and ribs.



Two Shrewsbury-based companies have been fined after a worker fell through a roof during extension work on a house extension the town

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that external scaffolding had been put into place around the perimeter of the extension to allow workers access to the roof. However, there were no measures in place internally to prevent falls into the extension and to the ground below.

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

The HSE investigation also found that Roofrite (Shropshire) Limited had failed to properly plan the work and to provide its workers with suitable instructions for carrying out their duties safely. Harding and Houlston Building Contractors Limited had also failed to ensure that the roof work had

been properly planned, and failed to carry out any monitoring of the work that was being completed by the roofers on the site, which was under its control.

Roofrite (Shropshire) Limited of Atcham Business Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, pleaded guilty to breaching three charges of Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and were fined £8,000 and order to pay costs of £2,990 at a hearing at Kidderminster Magistrates' Court on 19 May 2025.

Harding and Houlston Building Contractors Limited of Emstrey House North, Shrewsbury Business Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and were fined £500 and order to pay costs of £2,990 at the same hearing.

HSE inspector Sara Andrews said "Working at height remains one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death.

"This incident highlights the importance of undertaking a thorough assessment of the risks for all work at height activities. Suitable control measures, such as internal crash deck, should also be implemented to minimise the risk of serious personal injury.

"All principal contractors must ensure such control measures are in place throughout the duration of the work."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Nathan Cook and paralegal officer Gabrielle O'Sullivan.

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  5. HSE guidance on [working safely at height](#) is available.
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# Wood supplier hit with £40,000 for failing to protect workers from dust

- Workshop caked in dust when HSE inspected
- Guidance is available to prevent excessive exposure

A wood supplier has been fined £40,000 for failing to protect its workers from exposure to wood dust.

Fakenham-based Nat Pal Limited was visited by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in April 2023. Dust was found scattered across the floor, and the inspection identified failings in the company's control measures to prevent exposure of their employees to wood dust and enforcement action was taken.



Dust was found scattered across the floor

The HSE investigation also identified ongoing failings in the company's control measures and found that it had failed to take appropriate precautions despite previous enforcement on the same issues dating back to 2015.

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

That guidance states that employers must take effective measures to prevent exposure of their employees to wood dust. This will normally be by:

- Providing and maintaining local exhaust ventilation systems;
- Having appropriate face-fit tested respiratory protection.
- Carrying out health surveillance to monitor the respiratory health of employees.



The HSE inspection identified failings in the company's control measures to prevent exposure of their employees to wood dust and enforcement action was taken.

Nat Pal Limited of Cummings Road, Tattersett Business Park, Fakenham, pleaded guilty to a charge contrary to Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act, 1974, in that it failed to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees, as it failed to manage the risks created by operating a wood-working business. The company was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,072 at a hearing at Norwich Magistrates' Court on 16 May 2025.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Natalie Prince said "The fine imposed on Nat Pal Limited should underline that HSE take a failure to protect the health of employees extremely seriously.

"To make matters worse, this company had been visited previously and had failed to take steps to protect its workers.

"We will not hesitate to take action against companies which fail to do all they can."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Rebecca Shwartz and paralegal officer Imogen Isaac.

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## Fine for manufacturing firm after man loses finger in machinery

A manufacturing company has been fined £20,000 after a worker lost part of his finger in machinery at its site in St Helens.

The man was injured at Film & Foil Solutions Ltd, which makes flexible film used in the food industry, on 4 December 2023.

He was using a machine that converts and folds plastic film at the company's site on Haydock Industrial Estate. He tried to stop the material becoming tangled by using his hand to stop the poorly guarded rotating shaft. However, in doing so, his right index finger made contact with a rotating part of the machine and became entangled.

He was taken to hospital and due to the seriousness of the injuries, surgery was carried out the following day to amputate part of the finger on his dominant right hand.

He said: "I was unable to carry out normal daily tasks such as tying my shoelaces.

"My right hand is my dominant hand and I find it extremely difficult to write with that hand now.

"I am now self-conscious when I go outside.

"My family have also been affected by the injury as I am unable to do normal things I used to be able to do before.

"As a result of the injury I feel my job prospects have been affected, both now and in the future."

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Film & Foil Solutions Ltd failed to protect its employees, including ensuring the machinery being used to produce it had suitable guarding. The company had failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, resulting in a failure to provide suitable guarding arrangements on the machine and had failed to put in place an adequate safe system of work. It also revealed inconsistencies and inadequacies in the provision of information, instruction and training for those required to use the machine.

In a statement provided to HSE, the employee, who doesn't wish to be named, described the impact of the injuries.

HSE guidance states employers must take effective measures to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery or to stop the movement of any dangerous parts of it before any part of a person enters a danger zone. This will

normally be by fixed guarding, but where routine access is needed, other measures may be needed to stop the movement of dangerous parts, for example by having interlocked guards, pressure mats and electro-sensitive protective equipment (ESPE). Further detailed guidance on safe working with machinery is available.

Film & Foil Solutions Ltd, of North Florida Road, Haydock Industrial

Estate, Haydock, St. Helens, Merseyside, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £2,932 in costs at Sefton Magistrates' Court on 15 May 2025.

HSE inspector Sam Eves said "This incident could so easily have been avoided had the company taken simple steps to guard dangerous parts of machinery and implement safe working practices.

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

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Matthew Reynolds and supported by Paralegal Officer Imogen Isaac.

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**[British Airways fined more than £3million following worker injuries at](#)**

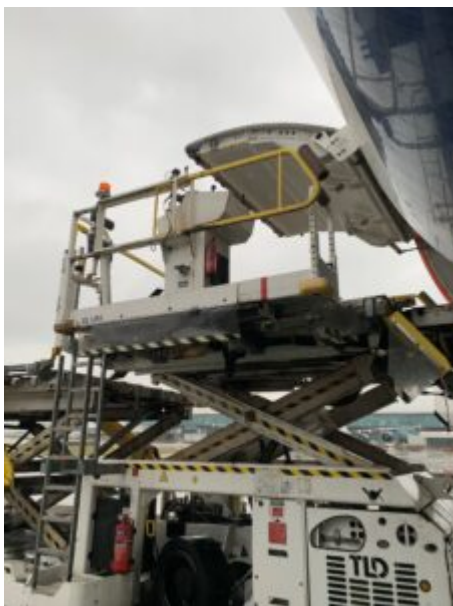
# Heathrow

- Both workers “fortunate to be alive”, says HSE lawyer
- HSE guidance available on working from height and safe handling of baggage
- Specific guidance on airside safety management available from Civil Aviation Authority

British Airways has been fined more than £3million after two employees fell from height and sustained serious injuries.

The airline was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) following two separate incidents at Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport.

On 25 August 2022, a 54 -year-old employee had been unloading baggage containers from an aircraft when he slipped off a telelevator and landed 1.5 metres onto the ground below. He suffered serious back and head injuries, including a fractured vertebrae, as a result.



The HSE investigation found there were gaps between the telelevator’s guardrails and the aircraft fuselage, the size of which depended on the type of aircraft, creating the fall from height hazard. The gaps increased in size after the front of the teleelevators’ platforms at Terminal 5 were extended – but additional measures to prevent falls from height had not been implemented.

At the time of the incident, British Airways had started a programme to retrofit extendable guardrails to teleelevators in response to previous HSE visits. This was completed following the incident.

In the second incident a British Airways worker sustained head injuries, including a fractured jaw and bleeding on the brain, on 8 March 2023, while unloading baggage containers from an aircraft following its arrival from Seattle. The 43-year-old fell from an elevator and landed three metres onto

the ground below.

Both employees were taken to hospital for treatment and had to take several months off work.

The HSE investigation into this incident identified a risk of employees falling from height from the front of the elevator platforms when they were being used during loading and unloading of some aircraft types. Flaps on either side of the platform would be left folded down leaving a gap between the platform and aircraft fuselage.

It also found that the elevator's operator platform had not been fully extended towards the aircraft, creating a gap which employees could fall through.

Falls from height remain one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death. HSE has detailed [guidance](#) on working safely at height while the Civil Aviation Authority has guidance with input from HSE on ground handling activities, including aircraft loading, on its [website](#).

British Airways PLC, of Waterside, Speedbird Way, Harmondsworth, Greater London, pleaded guilty to two charges under Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

The company was fined £1.33million in relation to the August 2022 incident, and £1.875million in relation to the March 2023 incident. The company was also ordered to pay £20,935 in costs at Southwark Crown Court on 15 May 2025.

HSE enforcement lawyer Rebecca Schwartz, who brought the prosecution, said:

"Falls from height present a real risk of death or serious, life-changing injury. Both employees are fortunate to be alive today.

"The risks of working at height and the necessary control measures are well established – in these cases adequate guardrails would have significantly reduced the risk of harm. This was a reasonably foreseeable risk that British Airways should have been aware of and therefore it should have done more to protect its employees."

Moving baggage between an aircraft and the luggage carousel in the terminal building is dynamic and time-pressured. It therefore comes with a range of risks to baggage handlers. Several HSE inspections have taken place at Heathrow Airport, identifying risks with manual handling and maintenance of equipment as well as falls from height. Airlines and ground handling companies have needed to take action as a result of these visits. HSE guidance is available [here](#).

This HSE prosecution was supported by HSE paralegal officer Melissa Wardle.

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