

Man “lucky to be alive” after incident at luxury yacht maker in Plymouth

A premium yacht makers has been hit with a £600,000 fine after one of its workers suffered life changing injuries at its shipyard in Plymouth.

Mark Gillen’s wife Sarah said she is lucky to still have her husband around after he sustained a catalogue of injuries, including 12 broken ribs and a severed right arm, when a staging platform weighing approximately one tonne, toppled over and fell on top of him.

The 54-year-old, who had worked for the company for 26 years, also suffered bleeds on the brain and remained in hospital for several months.



Mark Gillen sustained life changing injuries when a staging platform toppled over and on top of him

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found the platform fell due to one of the front wheels hitting a divot in a concrete surface. Mark had been part of a team working on a 72-foot vessel at the company’s Southyard site when the incident happened on 9 November 2021.

Sarah Gillen said: “Our worlds were turned upside down the day Mark had the catastrophic crush accident, leaving him with life changing injuries. He simply went to work that morning, and while he was eventually able to come home, our lives will never be the same.

“We are incredibly lucky to still have him with us but there is no denying that the road to recovery has been, and continues to be, extremely difficult and challenging.

"We are very grateful to the team at the HSE for all the work that has gone into holding Princess Yachts to account. However, the sad reality is that no fine, no matter how significant, will ever truly reflect the pain and ongoing suffering that Mark and our family has been through."



Mark had been part of a team working on a 72-foot vessel at the company's Southyard site when the incident happened

HSE enforcement lawyer Andy Siddall told Plymouth Magistrates' Court how on the day, finished mouldings were being moved from the firm's Southyard site to their one on Newport Street for fit-out. Staging platforms were used extensively by the company to form a safe and stable work at height platform that surrounds a moulding and later a boat whilst it is the manufacturing stage. As Mark and two of his colleagues began to push the platform, one of the front wheels hit a divot in the concrete surface, causing it to topple and fall on top of him. Due to the seriousness of his injuries, Mark was then airlifted to hospital.



The staging platform weight approximately one tonne

Sarah went on to say that before the incident Mark had been a fit, healthy strong and determined man.

"He had enjoyed weight training, boxing gym, cycling and playing golf with friends and a very active social life" she said.

"Now though, he is in constant chronic nerve pain which affects his ability to participate in the things he once loved, which in turn has a huge detrimental impact on his health and wellbeing.

"It is our hope that today's outcome will act as a wakeup call to Princess Yachts and other companies about the devastating and serious consequences of health and safety failings in the workplace, and that lessons are learnt that could prevent others being injured, or worse, in similar circumstances."



The front wheel of the staging platform hit a divot in the concrete surface which caused it to topple over

The HSE investigation found that there was a failure to assess the risks associated with moving staging platforms manually through the external yard. Had this been done, it would have identified the uneven ground as a hazard that required controlling. The risks could have been further eliminated by prohibiting the manual moving of the platforms and requiring any external movement to be carried out by forklift trucks.

Princess Yacht Limited of Newport Street Plymouth pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 2 (1). The company was fined £600,000 and ordered to pay costs of £9,146.

HSE inspector Paul Mannell echoed the comments made by Mark's wife Sarah: "Mark Gillen is lucky to be alive.

"The company should have had measures in place to ensure that mobile staging was never pushed through the yard by hand.

"As the measures taken post-accident clearly show, it would have been reasonably practicable to have had them in place when Mr Gillen was injured.

"They were implemented immediately after the accident at no cost to the company.

“The failure to have in place a safe system of work resulted in a life changing injury to a loyal employee who had worked for the company for 26 years.”

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.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.

[Philip White to lead Building Safety Regulator in permanent role](#)

Philip White, HSE’s Director of Building Safety (DoBS), will continue in his current role leading the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) on a permanent basis.

Philip has been leading the work to fully establish the BSR in HSE since taking over from Peter Baker in April 2023.

Ahead of the BSR becoming fully operational next year, the permanent appointment will ensure continuity for the programme as well as strong and experienced leadership at a vital stage of developing the new regulatory regime.



Philip White will lead BSR on a permanent basis

As HSE's DoBS, Philip will continue to perform the duties of the Chief Inspector of buildings working closely with BSR's statutory industry and resident committees to ensure both industry and residents are heard at the heart of the new regime.

He will keep the programme on course to deliver against agreed timelines and milestones including championing the need for culture change in industry and highlighting the need for collective responsibility to improve building safety.

Philip's extensive regulatory experience and proven leadership will be vital to the success of the BSR in the coming years, ensuring the strength of HSE continues to be brought to bear in creating an effective regulator that's fit for purpose for the future.

[Recycling company fined after worker's arm dragged into machine](#)

A recycling company in Weston-super-Mare has been fined £24,000 after one of its workers suffered serious injuries after his arm was dragged into a machine.

The 34-year-old local man suffered multiple fractures to his right arm that required surgery to repair. He had stopped a conveyor belt to remove some trapped material and his arm became trapped when a colleague inadvertently re-started the machine.

The man had been working for New West Gypsum Recycling (UK) Limited when the incident happened on 11 November 2021. His arm became entangled in the trapping point between a conveyor belt and the rotating drum powering the movement of the belt.



The man had been working for New West Gypsum Recycling (UK) Limited when the incident happened on 11 November 2021

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that dangerous parts of the conveyor were not properly guarded and were easily accessible to employees. The company did not have adequate procedures for electrical isolation and locking off machinery before working on it.

Taunton Magistrates heard that the company had failed to fit the machine with adequate guards to prevent access to dangerous parts and failed to implement a suitable procedure, for isolating and locking off the machine from the power supply, before starting any intervention to remove blockages.



The man's arm became entangled in the trapping point between a conveyor belt and the rotating drum powering the movement of the belt

New West Gypsum Recycling (UK) Limited, of The Taxiway, Weston-super-Mare, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2 of the Health and Safety At Work Act 1974. They were fined £24,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,600 at Taunton

Magistrates Court.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Dawn Lawrence said “This incident was completely preventable.

“The injuries sustained could have been much worse and should never have happened. Failure to securely isolate and lock off is a primary cause of many machinery incidents in the waste industry.

“Companies shouldn’t overlook important machinery safety basics, including adequate guards to prevent access to dangerous parts and a suitable procedure for isolating and locking off the machine from the power supply before starting any intervention.”

The case was prosecuted by HSE enforcement lawyer Samantha Wells and supported by HSE paralegal officer Helen Jacob.

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Cold weather working: Helping staff stay safe and warm

Employers are being reminded of their responsibilities to keep workers safe as the first spell of cold weather is set to hit the country.

Great Britain’s workplace regulator, the Health and Safety Executive, is stressing the importance of [protecting workers during the cold weather](#). It comes as the Met Office has issued a yellow weather warning for ice and snow for parts of the UK.

John Rowe, Head of Operational Strategy, said: “We’re calling on all employers to take a sensible approach during the cold weather that is coming our way. There are lots of jobs that will be more difficult in the these conditions. Most employers will recognise this and make appropriate accommodations for their staff. That is the right thing to do.

“It’s also important employers ensure staff are working in a reasonable temperature. People working in uncomfortably cold environments are less likely to perform well and more likely to behave unsafely because their ability to make good decisions deteriorates.”

Temperatures in indoor workplaces are covered by the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, which place a legal obligation on employers to provide a “reasonable” temperature in the workplace.

All employers are expected to ensure indoor workplaces are kept at a reasonable temperature. [The Approved Code of Practice](#) suggests the minimum temperature should normally be at least 16 degrees Celsius. If the work involves rigorous physical effort, the temperature should be at least 13 degrees Celsius.

John Rowe added: “Complying with the code of practice is the right thing for an employer to do. By maintaining a reasonable temperature, employers are likely to maintain the morale and productivity of their staff as well as improving health and safety.”

Ends

New regulator sets out strategic plan to drive positive change for building safety in England

- **The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) has published its first three-year strategic plan**
- **The strategy is a significant step forward, underlining BSR’s overarching direction and vision to galvanise positive culture change**
- **Collaboration is key to driving up safety and standards**

BSR is leading a critical change in culture and behaviours across industry and the whole built environment. The strategic plan establishes a vision to create a built environment where everyone is competent and takes responsibility to ensure buildings are of high quality and are safe. This represents the most significant change to regulation of building safety for a generation and means residents and other building users can be confident that industry is working together to make sure the tragedies of the past will never be repeated.

The Building Safety Regulator will:

- improve the safety and standards of all buildings
- make sure residents of higher-risk buildings are safe and feel safe in

their homes

- help restore trust in the built environment sector

We will do this by:

- delivering consistent standards within the building control profession
- overseeing and driving improvements across the whole built environment
- regulating the planning, design, and construction of new higher-risk buildings
- ensuring those who are responsible for occupied higher-risk buildings manage risk so that residents are safe
- working in partnership with co-regulators

Commenting in the foreword to the strategic plan, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove, said:

“The system that regulates our buildings must be practical and comprehensible. The Regulator must lead the sector in creating a built environment fit for the future.

“This first three-year strategic plan is a significant moment in this mission. It looks forward and lays out a solid foundation on which the Regulator can build its ambition in future years.

Philip White, HSE’s Director of Building Safety, said:

“This strategic plan sets out the guiding principles we have put in place to keep us focused on our priorities in delivering the new regime, and we will keep it under continuous review. We will ensure we have the right capability and capacity to meet this challenge as our remit continues to evolve, working with others sharing knowledge, expertise, and data.

“Our focus is clear and resolute as we oversee a culture of higher standards, putting building safety first. Our regulatory activities will be conducted in a way which is transparent, accountable, proportionate, and consistent.

“Throughout the next three years, BSR will continue to work across all sectors to ensure that those working in the building sector engage fully with the new regime. Our aim is that people will see fundamental changes to the safety and standard of all buildings and increased competency among industry professionals that raises those standards year on year.”

Chair of the Health and Safety Executive, Sarah Newton, said:

“This is a strong, coherent strategy built on collaboration with all BSR’s stakeholders, with a keen focus on ensuring industry takes ownership and responsibility for delivering a safe system throughout the life cycle of a building. This must be front of mind for everyone. And everyone must be aware of their legal responsibilities. Collaboration and collective responsibility are key for delivering better standards.”

The BSR’s Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 is available to view [here](#)

Notes to Editors:

About BSR: The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) is an independent body established by the Building Safety Act, 2022, and is part of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). BSR will raise building safety and performance standards and oversee a new stringent regime for high-rise residential buildings, as well as overseeing the wider system for regulating safety and performance of all buildings and increasing the competence of relevant regulators and industry professionals.

About HSE: 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