

HSE is checking businesses in Swindon are COVID-secure

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors are busy contacting and visiting businesses in Swindon to make sure workplaces are COVID-secure and help tackle a local outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases.

After a rise in workplace Covid-19 outbreaks in the town, the government moved Swindon on to its coronavirus watch-list.

HSE is working alongside Swindon Borough Council to support the understanding of any patterns in the confirmed coronavirus cases in the area while reassuring the local community.

Inspectors are out checking workplaces across Swindon, putting duty holders and employers on the spot and ensuring that they are complying with the latest Safer Workplace guidance relevant to their sector.

Being COVID-secure means that businesses need to put in place workplace adjustments to manage the risk and protect workers and others from coronavirus. Businesses can do this by following [five practical steps](#):

- Step 1. carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment
- Step 2. develop increased cleaning, hand washing and hygiene procedures
- Step 3. take all reasonable steps to help people work from home
- Step 4. maintain 2m social distancing where possible
- Step 5. where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk.

Simon Chilcott, HSE Principal Inspector, said: "As confirmed cases of the disease are on the rise in Swindon, we are talking to and conducting spot inspections on local businesses in the area to gauge and understand how they are managing risks in line with their specific business activity.

"Our visits are not just located on the town centre; we are conducting spot inspections and telephone inspections across businesses in the wider area to ensure becoming COVID-secure is their current number one priority.

"While reassuring businesses, we are also reminding them that it is a legal duty for employers to protect their workers and others from harm and this includes taking reasonable steps to control the risk and protect people from coronavirus. This will entail making often simple but effective workplace adjustments to become COVID-secure."

As inspections across the country are on-going, HSE has been utilising a number of different ways to ensure organisations and businesses are COVID-secure and compliant with the guidance.

HSE and local authority inspectors are finding some common issues across a range of sectors that include: failing to provide arrangements for monitoring, supervising and maintaining social distancing, failing to

introduce an adequate cleaning regime – particularly at busy times of the day – and providing access to welfare facilities to allow employees to frequently wash their hands with warm water and soap.

To support businesses, HSE is providing advice and guidance to manage risk and protect workers. Where some employers are not managing the risk, HSE will take action which can range from the provision of specific advice, issuing enforcement notices and stopping certain work practices until they are made safe. Where businesses fail to comply, this could lead to prosecution.

Simon Chilcott added: “If you are a business or organisation that is open anywhere in the UK you must ensure you have the right workplace adjustments in place to safeguard your workers from Coronavirus infection. HSE are combining a range of tactics to ensure they can check as many businesses as possible so if you get a phone call or a visit from HSE you must engage in the spot inspection process.

“We are also encouraging all employers to work with their employees when implementing changes to become COVID-secure and guiding them to the right information on how to do this.

“Our inspectors could call unannounced at any business in any sector so please make sure your workplace is COVID-secure and measures are in place to manage any risks.

“That way it will benefit the health of workers, customers and the local community while supporting the regional and national economy.”

For the latest information and Safer Workplaces guidance, see www.gov.uk

Ends

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. www.hse.gov.uk
2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. For HSE’s working safely guidance see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm>

The post [HSE is checking businesses in Swindon are COVID-secure](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

Unregistered gas fitter sentenced after carrying out dangerous gas work

An unregistered gas fitter has been sentenced to a community order with a curfew after carrying out illegal gas work at a home in East Northamptonshire.

Anthony Worrall trading as AW Plumbing and Drainage was reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2018 after he carried out gas work, including the removal of a gas fire and the replacement of a boiler and pipes at a home in Chelveston, East Northants between July and September. The homeowners raised concerns after the work was left in a dangerous condition.

Mr Worrall was not registered with the Gas Safe Register and had previously been warned by HSE in 2014 after he was found to have replaced a boiler and carried out associated gas pipework at a house in Raunds, East Northants whilst unregistered.

Anthony Worrall of Dean Close, Rushden, Northamptonshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 3(3) and 5(3) of the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998 at Northampton Crown Court. He was sentenced to a 12-month community order with a 20-day rehabilitation activity requirement and an electronically monitored curfew. He was also ordered to pay costs of £520.

After the hearing HSE Inspector Mark Austin said: "The dangers of working with gas are well known and the consequences of getting it wrong can lead to significant damage to property, serious injury or loss of life, therefore, there is a legal requirement to be both competent and Gas Safe Registered when working with gas.

"HSE will not hesitate to take action against those who do not work safely with gas."

Ends

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. The Gas Safety Register website address is: <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/>

The post [Unregistered gas fitter sentenced after carrying out dangerous gas work](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[HSE is making sure businesses in Greater Manchester are COVID-secure](#)

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is contacting businesses in Greater Manchester to make sure workplaces are COVID-secure to help tackle the local outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases.

HSE is working alongside Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and local public health authorities to support the understanding of any patterns in the confirmed coronavirus cases in the area. Inspectors are out checking workplaces across Greater Manchester, putting duty holders and employers on the spot and ensuring that they are complying with the latest Safer Workplace guidance relevant to their sector.

Being COVID-secure means that businesses need to put in place workplace adjustments to manage the risk and protect workers and others from coronavirus. Businesses can do this by following [five practical steps](#):

- Step 1. carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment
- Step 2. develop increased cleaning, hand washing and hygiene procedures
- Step 3. take all reasonable steps to help people work from home
- Step 4. maintain 2m social distancing where possible
- Step 5. where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk.

Jane Carroll, HSE Regulatory Inspector in the North West, said: “The number of confirmed cases of the disease is currently high in the area. We are talking to local businesses and inspecting sites in and around Greater Manchester to understand how they are managing risks in line with their specific business activity.

“Becoming COVID-secure needs to be the priority for all businesses in Greater Manchester to tackle the rise in the number of cases. It is a legal duty for employers to protect their workers and others from harm and this includes taking reasonable steps to control the risk and protect people from coronavirus. This means making workplace adjustments to become COVID-secure. We advise employers to work with their employees when implementing changes, to help increase confidence with workers, customers and the local community.”

As inspections across the country are on-going, HSE has been utilising a number of different ways to gather intelligence and reach out to businesses across the UK with a combination of site visits, phone calls and through the collection of supporting visual evidence such as photos and video footage.

HSE and local authority inspectors are finding some common issues across a range of sectors that include: failing to provide arrangements for monitoring, supervising and maintaining social distancing, failing to introduce an adequate cleaning regime – particularly at busy times of the day – and providing access to welfare facilities to allow employees to frequently wash their hands with warm water and soap.

To support businesses, HSE is providing advice and guidance to manage risk and protect workers. Where some employers are not managing the risk, HSE will take action which can range from the provision of specific advice, issuing enforcement notices and stopping certain work practices until they are made safe. Where businesses fail to comply, this could lead to prosecution.

Phil Strickland, Principal Inspector of Construction for Greater Manchester, said: “All businesses are in scope for inspections that means any size business in any sector can receive an unannounced inspection to ensure they are COVID-secure. By making sure that businesses have measures in place to manage the risks, we can benefit the health of the local community as well as support the UK economy.”

For the latest information and Safer Workplaces guidance, see www.gov.uk

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[Powder Coating company fined after worker suffers serious back injury](#)

A powder coating company has been fined after a worker in a factory in Poole, Dorset suffered shattered lumbar vertebrae and had to be kept in a lying down

position on his back for two weeks in hospital.

Southampton Magistrates' Court heard how on 27 July 2017, the worker was checking the straps on a wheeled A-frame trolley containing ten 6m long twin wall polycarbonate sheets weighing 34kg each, when the load unexpectedly toppled onto him pushing him to the ground. Colleagues had to lift the sheets off the worker and call for an ambulance.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that C & R Powder Coating and Welding Fabrication Ltd had failed to ensure the safety of workers, engaged in the transfer and storage of plastic sheeting on a trolley. The investigation found that the trolley was not suitable for the storage and transport of the plastic sheets because it was not sufficiently long enough and had no means for ensuring the straps being used would stay in place.

C & R Powder Coating and Welding Fabrication Ltd of 4 – 6 The Wharf Centre, Wharf Street, Warwick, Warwickshire, CV34 5LB pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4 of The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER). The company has been fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,338.20.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Berenice Ray, said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out safe working practices and ensuring work equipment is suitable for the purpose for which it is to be used.

"Accidents like this can happen with plastic sheets but equally with wood board, steel plate or stone slabs. Any flat profile material should be secured against falling or slipping out as the consequences can be a serious injury or even a fatality.

"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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[Company fined after causing a high-pressure gas leak near to the M73 and M8 motorway](#)

John Murphy and Sons Ltd was sentenced for safety breaches after damaging a 10-inch gas pipeline whilst undertaking work to allow the widening of the M8 motorway.

Hamilton Sheriff Court heard that on 16 January 2014, during the course of the excavation works for the gas pipeline diversion, John Murphy and Sons Ltd hit the high pressure pipeline which was operating at 39 barg. This resulted in 271 tonnes of gas being released into the atmosphere in the vicinity of employees near the M73 junction.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the high pressure pipeline had been hit by an excavator during works for the gas pipeline diversion. J. Murphy and Sons Ltd, of Highgate Road, London, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 15 of The Pipelines Safety Regulations 1996 and Section 33(1) (c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £150,000.

After the hearing Hywel Williams, a HSE inspector specialising in pipelines, said: "This incident was totally avoidable and put workers at risk. The contractor failed to follow procedures and chose to conduct excavations in the vicinity of a high pressure pipeline by mechanical excavator instead of excavating by hand."

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