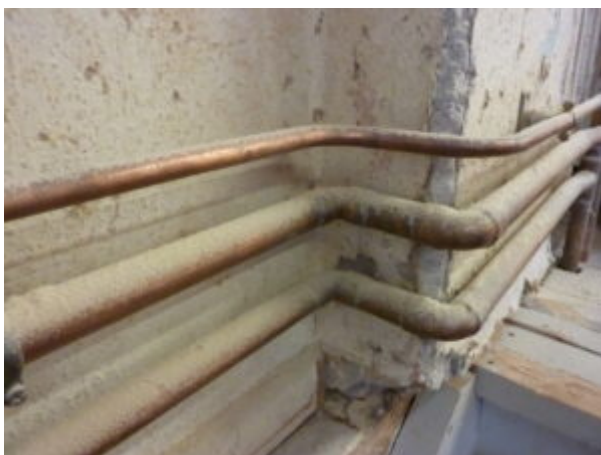


# Northwich furniture company fined over multiple wood dust failures

A Northwich furniture company has been fined £16,000 after it repeatedly failed to protect its employees from exposure to wood dust.

Pineland Furniture Ltd, based on Witton Street in the Cheshire town, was inspected by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on two separate occasions over a two-year period – with both identifying identical breaches.

Nathan Cook, HSE senior enforcement lawyer, told Chester Magistrates Court, how a visit in December 2019 found significant breaches of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) – resulting in six improvement notices being served. These included requirements for the company to undertake statutory examinations of its wood dust extraction systems and to undertake face fit testing for those employees required to wear tight fitting face masks.



- HSE inspectors identified Pineland Furniture had failed to protect its workers from wood dust

However, another visit to the same premises in November 2021 found identical breaches and again improvement notices were served.

This inspection came as part of HSE's national [campaign targeting woodworking businesses](#). The significant occupational health risks associated with wood dust and the continued failure to ensure control of exposure to wood dust resulted in HSE prosecuting the company.

Pineland Furniture Limited pleaded guilty to breaching regulations 7(1) and 9(2)(a) of COSHH. They were fined £16,000 and was ordered to pay £3008 costs at a hearing at Chester Magistrates Court on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023.



- HSE inspectors identified Pineland Furniture had failed to protect its workers from wood dust

After the hearing, HSE inspector Ian Betley said: “Wood dust is a substance hazardous to health because it can cause serious non-reversible health problems, including asthma; dermatitis; and irritation to the eyes, nose and throat.

“Occupational lung disease causes the death of 12,000 people in Great Britain annually, and there are an estimated 19,000 new cases of breathing and lung problems each year, where individuals regarded their condition as being caused or made worse by work.

“It is important to carry out statutory thorough examinations of extraction equipment and ensure face fit testing, as required by COSHH to help prevent ill health.

“We will not hesitate to take enforcement action when necessary to make sure workers’ health is protected.”

#### **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.
4. Guidance on [woodworking safety](#) is available.
5. HSE’s national [Dust Kills campaign microsite](#) contains helpful information.

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## Unregistered plumber handed suspended prison sentence for illegal gas work

A man from Essex has been given a suspended jail sentence after carrying out illegal gas work and breaching a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) enforcement notice.

On 18 April 2020, Joshua Pitman, 28, undertook gas work at a house in South Woodham Ferrers, Essex, which included installing gas pipework.

However, Mr Pitman's installation at the house was found to not be up to current standards by a Gas Safe Registered engineer.



Andrew Parsons, who lives in the property with his wife Patricia Parsons, says Mr Pitman's illegal gas work caused him and his family a great deal of distress.

An investigation by HSE found that Joshua Pitman undertook illegal work while still serving a suspended jail sentence, having previously been convicted of the same offences.

In October 2019, Mr Pitman was sentenced to 12 weeks in prison, suspended for two years, after being prosecuted by HSE. This HSE prosecution was in relation to illegal gas work Mr Pitman carried out in Brentwood, Essex, in November 2016, where he installed a boiler in one property and relocated a boiler at another despite not being registered with Gas Safe Register. During this prosecution, Mr Pitman was also served with a Prohibition Notice by HSE which banned him from carrying out gas work while being unregistered. Mr Pitman breached this enforcement notice while working on Mr Parsons' home in April 2020.

Mr Pitman has never completed the required Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme (ACS) qualifications to demonstrate he is competent to carry out gas work nor been registered with Gas Safe Register.

HSE guidance can be found at: [Gas – HSE](#)

Mr Parsons, 49, said: “[Joshua Pitman] did not have a Gas Safe certificate [and this] caused a lot of disruption for myself and my family via having to put all that work right – the involvement of Cadent, HSE and various other contributory factors that have come in to get that fixed and therefore cost a fair amount of money, but also more importantly, put my family in danger by somebody purporting to be Gas Safe Registered and in fact not being and doing the work without those qualifications.

“So the result today of him pleading guilty, hopefully that will encourage others who may be thinking of doing this sort of work, the sentences that he has got, the compensation he is going to have to pay, hopefully that will deter other people from doing similar work.”

Joshua Pitman, of Whitesmith Drive, Billericay, Essex, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 33 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Regulation 3 of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was sentenced to 16 months imprisonment, suspended for two years, fined £22,500 and ordered to complete 200 hours of unpaid work at Chelmsford Crown Court on 10 October 2023. He was also ordered to pay costs of £40,000 and £5,810 in compensation to Mr Parsons.

HSE inspector Connor Stowers said: “Joshua Pitman undertook gas work which he knew to be illegal and that he was not registered to do. All gas work must be carried out by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life. The sentence should highlight that HSE and the courts take illegal gas work very seriously because of the danger it can pose both to homeowners and the wider community.”

Mr Parsons continued: “I would urge anybody out there who is going to employ a plumber, heating engineer, anybody who is going to be doing gas work, make sure you check the certificates, make sure you check those people are who they say they are, that they have got all the right qualifications and that they have all the right certifications to do that work and not putting anybody in danger.”



#### Notes to Editors:

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  2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](http://legislation.gov.uk/)
  3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
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# Food processing company sentenced after worker suffers serious injuries

A company has been fined £20,000 after an employee's arm was drawn into machinery and seriously injured.

The worker, Piotr Zielinski, 58, from Nottinghamshire, was working for food processing company Belwood Foods Limited.

His right arm was drawn into a machine and wrist crushed while cleaning poultry processing machinery at Belwood Food's site at Lowmoor Business Park, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham, on 22 November 2019.

He had been removing debris that was trapped on the hinges of an open access panel door at the base of a hopper machine. The door had been opened to allow the debris to drain from the auger.



The access panel door at the base of the hopper

While removing the debris however, the auger was still in operation and caught the worker's right arm, drawing it into the machine up to the elbow.

This led to skin and muscle being removed from Mr Zielinski's right arm with his wrist also being crushed. His injuries required surgery.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the access panel door was able to be opened freely whilst the auger was in



motion. There were no controls in place to prevent the panel from being opened while the auger was moving. It was not locked or interlocked, and there was no safe isolation procedure for this weekly cleaning task.

HSE guidance can be found at: [Equipment and machinery – HSE](#)

Belwood Foods Limited, of The Henley Building, Newtown Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £7,839.21 in costs at Nottingham Magistrates' Court on 9 October 2023.

HSE inspector Lee Greatorex said: "This injury was easily preventable. Employers have a responsibility to properly assess the risks from all aspects of their operations, including cleaning and maintenance, and implement effective control measures to minimise the risk from dangerous parts of machinery. HSE will not hesitate to take action against companies which do not do all that they should to keep people safe."

This prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Samantha Wells.

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We seek to 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. [hse.gov.uk](http://hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](http://legislation.gov.uk/)
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## **[HSE statement on "Lead in ammunition" UK REACH proposals](#)**

Announcing the publication today of an [analysis setting out the risks](#) from lead in ammunition and the opening of the [60-day consultation](#) on the draft socioeconomic analysis, Dr Richard Daniels, HSE's Director of Chemicals Regulation Division, said:

"We thank everyone who took part in the initial consultation. We received 2,759 responses, including technical submissions, which we have had to work through carefully to inform our analysis of risk and any proposals to restrict lead in ammunition.

"Following the publication of our analysis, we have today opened a 60-day

public consultation on the draft socioeconomic analysis.

“There are already legally binding measures in place to protect Britain’s wildlife in designated wetlands from the use of lead shot and bullets, but it was important that we had a more detailed analysis of the risks to the wider environment and human health.

“The risks from lead are generally well understood, however we are proposing further restrictions to ensure the risks from the use of lead ammunition are adequately managed.

“People will still be able to continue to shoot outdoors, but we are proposing that for some outdoor uses in the future, alternatives to lead ammunition would need to be used.

“We understand that the use of lead shot is required for outdoor target shooting in international competitions – such as the Olympic Games. We are therefore proposing a derogation allowing a limited number of identified athletes to continue training and representing their country.

“Other derogations would allow the use of lead bullets in target shooting at outdoor ranges with appropriate risk management measures in place.”

#### **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. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), in its role as the agency for UK REACH, which is the framework for managing the risks from chemical substances in Great Britain, has worked with the Environment Agency and published its risk assessment opinion [registry-of-restriction-intentions.xlsx](https://www.registry-of-restriction-intentions.xlsx) ([live.com](https://www.live.com)).
3. The published opinion on the risk assessment was developed after considering the responses from last year’s consultation. Additionally, in line with the legal requirements under the UK Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation, HSE also opened a 60-day public consultation on the draft socio-economic opinion. Any comments that will help HSE and the Environment Agency with this draft opinion should be submitted here [UK REACH – Public Consultation on Lead in Ammunition – Health and Safety Executive – Citizen Space](https://www.uk-reach-public-consultation-on-lead-in-ammunition-health-and-safety-executive-citizen-space) ([hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)).
4. The Agency also met stakeholders to listen to their concerns, gather evidence and discuss the proposals. The Agency opinion has been reviewed by a Challenge Panel made up of independent experts from the REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool (RISEP), who provide scrutiny and challenge.

5. In developing the derogation for using lead bullets for target shooting at outdoor ranges with appropriate risk management measures in place, the Agency met with shooting organisations to discuss current practice at ranges. It is estimated that around 95 per cent of outdoor ranges already have sufficient risk management measures in place.
  6. HSE news releases are available at: <http://press.hse.gov.uk>.
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## [Lights, camera, take action this World Mental Health Day](#)

The scale of reported work-related stress across the UK economy has been increasing year on year, and Britain's workplace regulator is campaigning for employers to take action.

As the world acknowledges World Mental Health Day, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) welcomes three new partners to its Working Minds campaign, which urges workplaces to take action on work related stress and mental health.

All three new partners joining Working Minds campaign are in the entertainment and leisure sector – an industry which by its very nature, is fast paced and changeable with many being self-employed, freelancers or contracted for set amounts of time.

This can result in lots of uncertainty and long and unsociable hours. In the [Looking Glass '22 survey](#) conducted by the Film and TV Charity only 11% described the industry as a mentally healthy place to work.

The Mark Milsome Foundation, The Association of British Theatre Technicians and The British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions, will now join 23 Working Minds partners across different industries to raise awareness of the support available and the campaign's key messages.

The law requires all employers to prevent work related stress to support good mental health in the workplace. No matter the size or type of business, employers have a legal duty to ensure risks of stress and mental ill-health are considered in health and safety risk assessments and acted upon. Measures should be put in place to prevent stress and support workers' mental health.

World Mental Health Day (10 October) has been celebrated for over 30 years, and whilst awareness and acceptance of stress and mental health may be increasing, action – particularly prevention – is not. Stress, depression and anxiety are the number one cause of work-related ill-health in Great Britain.

**Elizabeth Goodwill, head of work-related stress and mental health policy team**

**at HSE**, said: “Small actions done routinely can make a huge difference to how stress and mental health issues are recognised and responded to where you work. Employers should make it routine to check in with individuals and teams about pressures they’re facing and agree actions to help prevent and address them.

“Some of the most common issues are workload pressures, tight deadlines, too much responsibility and a lack of managerial support. Taking action doesn’t have to be ground-breaking, your response can be small things that make a big difference. For example, making sure you have regular catch ups to discuss workload and how the team can share the load or helping to prioritise work and deadlines.

“Taking an organisational approach that tackles the root cause of work related stress is key and can help the whole team rather than just an individual, and you may be able to take one action that helps a number of people.”

For guidance on managing workplace stress and talking to workers about it, see our [Working Minds campaign](#).

**Samantha Wainstein, The Mark Milsome Foundation chair, says:** “At the heart of our mission is the commitment to make film and TV sets safe for all cast and crew, by advocating for better health and safety practice across the industry and collaborating with partners to raise awareness about key issues that need to be addressed. A fundamental part of our advocacy is emphasising the importance of wellbeing and happiness on set, as this plays an integral role in ensuring the safety of both cast and crew.”

**Mig Burgess, The Association of British Theatre Technicians co-chair, says:** “The ABTT are delighted to join the HSE’s working minds campaign as a partner. As an association we are committed to upholding standards in technical excellence, safety, and compliance for live performance, and partnering with the HSE and its working minds campaign formalises our commitment to promote better practices around well-being and mental health in the workplace.”

**Paul Kelly, Chief Executive of The British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and**

**Attractions says:** “Mental health must be a top priority for our industry, especially following a few very difficult years for staff and customers. As an association, we are committed to providing the information, resources and tools that our members need – supporting them to support their teams.”

### **Help is available**

If you or someone you know needs help or support, reach out and ask how they are feeling and coping. There are tools and sources of support out there that can help.

[Sign up to support HSE’s Working Minds campaign](#) to help drive positive change across Britain’s workplaces.

- [download a risk assessment template](#) and see some examples
- [download a Talking Toolkit](#) to help structure conversations
- print out / share our [campaign resources round up](#)
- print out / display our [Working Minds 5 steps poster](#)
- get your [personalised mental health action plan](#), with tips and advice to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing from Every Mind Matters (NHS).

### **Work in entertainment or leisure?**

Contact [Film & TV charity](#) for confidential and free support for anyone working behind the scenes in film, TV or cinema. Support Line 0800 054 0000.

The Mark Milsome Foundation – [Film and TV Online Safety Passport Course](#) (90 minutes)

Association of Event Venues – [Heads up: your well-being tool kit](#)

Read the [Blog from Mig Burgess](#), teacher, Creative Designer and Production Technician on her summer commitment to learn more about work-related stress and the [guidance note](#) she created for The Association of British Theatre Technicians.

### **Notes to Editors**

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2. To read more about HSE's Working Minds campaign click [here](#)
3. For press and media enquiries please contact [media.enquiries@hse.gov.uk](mailto:media.enquiries@hse.gov.uk)