

Company and director fined after worker fractures skull

A company and its director have been fined after an employee was struck by an object while manufacturing large steel cable drums for the offshore industry.

The man, who is now 54, had been working for Code-A-Weld (Great Yarmouth) Ltd when the incident happened on 19 November 2022. Although the company had manufactured steel drums previously they had never manufactured drums of this size – with these ones weighing in excess of seven tonnes.

However, during the process, the jacking set-up failed at the company's site in Harfreys Industrial Estate in Great Yarmouth which resulted in a catalogue of serious injuries including fractures to the man's face and skull, and him losing the sight in one eye.

He was airlifted to hospital, placed into an induced coma and spent just under three weeks in hospital whereby he needed facial reconstruction surgery.



Steel drum

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that Code-A-Weld (Great Yarmouth) Ltd failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment; control risks from welding in confined spaces; and to provide the full training required.

The investigation also found that company director, David Fowler, failed to provide safe systems of work in relation to metal fabrication work, despite previous HSE interventions regarding failure to risk assess activities in the

fabrication workshop.

Had the company put in place correct measures, such as suitable risk assessment, safe systems of work and planning for jacking activity, the incident could have been prevented.

HSE guidance can be found at: [Health and Safety in engineering workshops](#).

Following a sentencing hearing at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court on 20 June 2024, DJ Williams issued their written judgment on 5 July:

- Code-A-Weld (Great Yarmouth) Ltd, of Harfreys Industrial Estate, Bessemer Way, Great Yarmouth, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £24,000 and ordered to pay £3,500 in costs.
- David Fowler, of Harfreys Industrial Estate, Bessemer Way, Great Yarmouth, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay £1,500 in costs.

HSE inspector Natalie Prince 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.

"If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, the life threatening injuries sustained by the employee could have been prevented."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Robert James.

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.