

Company fined after surveyor dies

An Inverness company has been fined after a surveyor died from injuries caused by an electrical explosion.

Christopher Wayne Earley, a director at CWE Asbestos Consultants Ltd, was carrying out an asbestos survey on 10 December 2020.

Mr Earley was injured by an electrical explosion while inspecting an electric panel. He suffered burns to a third of his body, affecting his face, right arm, right side of his chest and left hand. Three months later, Mr Earley, a father-of-four, passed away aged 64 following multiple infections and sepsis complications brought on by his injuries.

He'd been carrying out the survey for Global Energy Nigg Limited at its Shop 7 premises at Nigg Energy Park in the Cromarty Firth.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the switch room Mr Earley was surveying at the time of the incident was not in an appropriate condition. This created a risk as the live switch panels did not have a warning label indicating they were energised with electricity running through them.

There was no warning of electrical danger at the internal doorway between Shop 7 and the switch room – the internal door itself was missing. This failure to maintain the switch room in an appropriate condition was the underlying cause of the incident. The primary duty of care belonged to Global Energy Nigg Limited.

Global Energy Nigg Limited of Henderson Road, Inverness, Highland pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) and Section 33(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. They were fined £80,000 at Tain Sheriff Court on 18 January 2023.

HSE inspector Niall Miller said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices. Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

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](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>