

Company fined as stunt performer sustains life-changing injuries during filming of Fast and Furious movie

A production company has been fined after a stunt performer was injured during the filming of Fast and Furious 9: The Fast Saga.

Joe Watts, from Surrey, sustained life-changing injuries after he fell approximately 25 feet at Warner Bros. studios in Leavesden, Hertfordshire on 22 July 2019.

He had been filming a fight scene for the action movie.

Mr Watts fell 25 feet onto the concrete floor below when the line on his stunt vest became detached.



The stunt vest Mr Watts was wearing

As a result of his fall, Mr Watts suffered a fractured skull and a severe traumatic brain injury, which has resulted in permanent impairment and disability.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found several failings by

FF9 Pictures Limited. FF9 Pictures Limited's risk assessment failed to address the potential issue of a rope snap or a link failure, there was no system for double checking that the link had been properly engaged and tightened. There was also no system for checking the link for signs of deformation or stretching between takes, the manufacturer's website stated that the link used was forbidden for use as PPE and shock loading should be avoided. On top of that, six-monthly inspections of harnesses were required but Mr Watts' harness had not been inspected in the last six months and FF9 Pictures Limited did not extend the crash matting needed to mitigate the consequences of an unintended fall following changes to the set and the sequence of the stunt.



The incident took place at Warner Brothers' studios in Leavesden

FF9 Pictures Limited, of St. Giles High Street, London, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £800,000 and ordered to pay £14,752.85 in costs at Luton Magistrates' Court on 24 November 2023.

HSE inspector Roxanne Barker said: "Mr Watts' injuries were life-changing and he could have easily been killed. In stunt work, it is not about preventing a fall but minimising the risk of an injury."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Rebecca Schwartz and supported by HSE paralegal officer Gabrielle O'Sullivan.

Sentencing, district judge Talwinder Buttar stated Mr Watts is fortunate to be alive and added that she was astonished that the crash matting was not adequate.

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. 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](https://www.press.hse.gov.uk)