

Construction company fined £800,000 after death of 10-year-old boy

A Scottish civil engineering contractor has been fined £800,000 for safety breaches after a 10-year-old boy died after falling down a manhole on a building site in Glasgow.

Ten-year-old Shea Ryan went out to play with his friends on the evening of 16th July 2020 and got onto the construction site where he was able to enter a manhole within which, he fell. Emergency services and local residents raced to the scene and rescued Shea from the manhole but tragically he died from his injuries.

The construction site was part of a surface water management project being carried out adjacent to Glenkirk Drive in the Drumchapel area of Glasgow on behalf of Glasgow City Council.



The construction site adjacent to Glenkirk Drive

An investigation by Police Scotland and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that insufficient measures had been taken to prevent children gaining access to the construction site.

The HSE investigation also found that R.J. McLeod (Contractors) Limited, the company in charge of the site, had failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the site, which resulted in a failure to adequately inspect and maintain suitable perimeter fencing, and install other suitable security measures. HSE guidance on protecting the public can be found here: [Public protection – construction industry health & safety \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/public-protection-construction-industry-health-safety/)



The construction site adjacent to Glenkirk Drive

R.J. McLeod (Contractors) Limited, of London Road, Glasgow, 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 a victim surcharge of £60,000 at Glasgow Sheriff Court on 14 April 2023.

HSE Principal Inspector Graeme McMinn said “Shea should never have been able to get onto and play on that site. The security measures should have taken account of the adjacent children’s play park and the likelihood of children trying to gain access.

“The company should have had robust measures in place to maintain the fence line that was regularly being damaged and consider what additional security measures were needed to deter and prevent unauthorised access.

“The construction industry should be aware that some children can be drawn to construction sites as exciting places to play. It must do everything it can to keep them out of construction sites and away from danger to prevent a tragedy such as this happening again.”

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>
4. HSE guidance on protecting the public can be found here: [Public protection – construction industry health & safety \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/public-protection-construction-industry-health-safety/)