

Fine for fairground operator after man 'everyone fell in love with' dies

A fairground operator has been fined after a man 'everyone fell in love with' died weeks after suffering serious head injuries while working on a ride in South Shields.

Dean Cariss was struck by a moving car on a rollercoaster ride while daily testing and maintenance was being carried out at Ocean Beach Pleasure Park on 19 March 2023.

The 52-year-old sustained severe head injuries and as a result died in hospital 13 days later.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that Premier Attractions Limited had failed to ensure the health and safety of employees. The company pleaded guilty and was fined £28,000 at South Tyneside Magistrates Court on 17 December 2024.



Dean Cariss was struck by a moving car on a rollercoaster ride at Ocean Beach Pleasure Park

Mr Cariss, who had been with his partner Helen Wright for more than 15 years, was also a step father to Helen's three grown-up children, as well as being a step grandparent to nine.

In a written statement provided to the court, Helen said: "Dean had a fantastic relationship with my kids.

"He also idolised his grandchildren, and treated them like his own.

"He was bubbly and fun and would do daft things with them.

"He was very generous and liked to help people."

That helpful and generous nature also included him acting as Helen's carer for several years.

"My whole life has been turned upside down and back to front," she went on to

say.

“He would move heaven and earth for me.

“He was a big personality and I miss the fun and laughter.

“Silence is deafening when I am in the house on my own.

“Everybody fell in love with him when they met him. There was no serious side, just laughter and fun.”

The investigation by HSE found that Premier Attractions Limited had failed to ensure the health and safety of employees. It was found that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment had not been carried out and proper controls had not been employed to prevent employees accessing dangerous areas whilst the ride was operating.

Premier Attractions Limited of Little Hulton, Manchester, pleaded guilty to failing to comply with section 2(1) of The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 – an offence contrary to s.33(1)(a) of that Act. They were fined £28,000 and ordered to pay £5,976 costs.

HSE Inspector William Gilroy said: “This tragic incident led to the avoidable death of a caring, family man.

“Dean’s death could easily have been prevented if his employer had acted to identify and manage the risks involved, and to put a safe system of work in place.

“Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those who fall below the required standards.”

Further information:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
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. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences in England and Wales can be found [here](#) and for those in Scotland [here](#).