

[Fine issued after workers exposed to asbestos during hotel demolition](#)

A company director has been fined after workers were exposed to asbestos during the demolition of a hotel in Cornwall.

Mr Paul Stephens, director of the now liquidated Stephens and Stephens Developers Limited, was fined more than £60,000 as a result of failures at the former Cliffdene Hotel in Newquay in 2020. The hotel had closed in 2018 and was part of a redevelopment plan to build residential apartments on the site.



The former Cliffdene Hotel in Newquay

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the control of asbestos at the site came after the hotel had been almost entirely demolished in August 2020. The company had overall control over the assessment and removal of all asbestos containing materials (ACMs) on site.

However, further enquiries revealed the presence of extensive asbestos debris, a sign that significant spreading had occurred, and that those actions taken to control exposure had been inadequate. Stephens was charged for failure to take reasonably practicable steps to contain the spread of asbestos.

- The issue of asbestos more widely, and improving knowledge of the dangers, is the focus of two HSE campaigns. Guidance on [asbestos safety](#) has recently been updated and the current [Asbestos: Your Duty](#) campaign aims to improve understanding of what the legal duty to manage asbestos involves.

Paul Stephens of Bar Meadows, Malpas, Truro, Cornwall pleaded guilty to breaching regulations 16 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 by virtue of Section 37(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He was fined £65,813 and ordered to pay costs of £26,116 at Truro Crown Court on 24 April 2024.



Asbestos debris was scattered across the site

Speaking after the hearing HSE principal inspector Georgina Symons said: “The hotel was not in a state of disrepair and presented no structural danger, so there is no reason why the removal of ACMs could not be done ahead of its demolition.

“Identification of the hazard is key. No asbestos removal should happen if there is a risk of exposing workers to it. There needs to be a sufficient assessment as to the presence, location and condition of asbestos at all premises.

“Those tasked with undertaking the assessment should have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to undertake this work.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Matt Reynolds.

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.
4. HSE has recently updated its guidance on [asbestos safety](#) and has just launched its [Asbestos: Your Duty](#) campaign that aims to improve understanding of what the legal duty to manage asbestos involves.