

# Galvanizing company prosecuted after employee fatally injured

Hereford Galvanizers Limited, a company that undertakes hot dip galvanizing for the corrosion protection of steelwork, has been fined after an employee was fatally injured.

Kidderminster Magistrates' Court heard that on 2 February 2019, an employee was operating an overhead crane adjacent to the molten zinc bath, when a tubular steel brace exploded during galvanizing, causing it to 'rocket' across the workshop floor, fatally striking the employee who was standing in its path. The steel brace failed due to the absence of vent holes to prevent the build-up of pressure inside the hollow steel brace during the galvanizing process.

A quantity of liquid entered the brace during earlier stages of the galvanizing process; when immersed into the 450°C zinc bath, the trapped liquid turned rapidly into steam generating very high internal pressures sufficient to cause failure of the brace. This resulted in a violent explosion which propelled the steel brace across the workshop floor.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company, based at Westfields Trading Estate, Hereford, had failed to adequately assess the risk and devise and implement suitable safe systems and methods of work for venting checks. In addition, employees were not adequately trained or supervised when completing venting checks.

Hereford Galvanizers Limited, which operates under the trading umbrella name 'Hereford and Shropshire Galvanizers', pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and have been fined £266,000 and ordered to pay costs of £14,635.29 plus a victim surcharge £170.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Sian Donne said: "This tragic incident led to the avoidable death of a young man. His death could easily have been prevented if his employer had acted to identify and manage the risks involved, put a safe system of work in place and ensured that employees were appropriately trained and supervised."

Notes to Editors:

1. The [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#)<sup>[1]</sup> 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 about the [legislation referred to in this case](#)<sup>[2]</sup>
3. [Latest HSE press releases](#)<sup>[3]</sup>

4. See more information about [the safe use of work equipment](#)