

HSE releases annual workplace fatality figures for 2020/21

Provisional data released today shows that a total of 142 workers were killed at work in Great Britain in 2020/21, an increase of 29 from the previous year, though the number of deaths in 2019/20 (113) was low compared to other recent years.

In statistical terms the number of fatalities has remained broadly level in recent years – the average annual number of workers killed at work over the five years 2016/17-2020/21 is 136.

Over the past 20 years there has been a long-term reduction in the number of workplace fatalities, demonstrating that Great Britain is one of the safest places to work in the world.

[The figures released by the Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) relate to workplace incidents. They do not include deaths arising from occupational exposure to disease, including Covid-19.

HSE's Chief Executive, Sarah Albon, said: "Whilst the working world in which we now live has created new health challenges for workers and for those who have a duty towards them, safety must also remain a priority. Whilst the picture has improved considerably over the longer term and Great Britain is one of the safest places to work in the world, every loss of life is a tragedy, we are committed to ensuring that workplaces are as safe as they can be and that employers are held to account and take their obligations seriously."

The three most common causes of fatal injuries continue to be workers falling from height (35), being struck by a moving vehicle (25) and being struck by a moving object (17), accounting for more than half of fatalities in 2020/21.

These figures also continue to highlight the risks to older workers with around 30 per cent of fatal injuries in 2020/21 involving workers aged 60 or over, even though such workers only make up around 11 per cent of the workforce.

In addition, members of the public continue to be killed in connection with work-related incidents. In 2020/21, 60 members of the public were killed as a result of a work-related incident.

The figures for Mesothelioma, which is a cancer contracted through past exposure to asbestos and is one of the few work-related diseases where deaths can be counted directly, show 2,369 people died in Great Britain in 2019. This is seven per cent lower than the average of 2,540 deaths over the previous seven years.

Current mesothelioma deaths largely reflect occupational asbestos exposures that occurred before the 1980s. The figure for 2019 is consistent with

projections that a reduction in total annual deaths would start to become apparent at this point. However, it is still not certain how quickly annual deaths will decline.

A fuller assessment of work-related ill-health and injuries, drawing on HSE's full range of data sources, will be provided as part of the annual Health and Safety Statistics release on 16 December 2021.

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. The figures released today of both fatal injuries and mesothelioma deaths make up part of a long running series enabling both short and long-term comparisons of change. Putting the number of fatal injuries in context of previous years' data is difficult given the disruption to the economy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the government response, which have had a significant effect on the UK labour market. Many businesses ceased operating or changed their working practices, while government interventions have allowed for the furloughing of workers. The number of workplace deaths in 2020/21 should be seen in the context of these challenges in the labour market.
3. The fatal injury statistics are based on deaths from work-related incidents. They do not include deaths from occupational diseases or diseases arising from certain occupational exposures (including COVID-19). RIDDOR reports involving Covid fatalities are available [here](#). The number of COVID-19 death reports are not directly comparable with the number of fatal injuries published today.
4. Agriculture, forestry and fishing continues to account for a large share of the annual worker fatality count – 34 in 2020/21, up from the record low of 21 seen in 2019/20. It has the highest rate of fatal injury of all the main industry sectors, with the annual average rate over the last five years around 20 times as high as the all industry rate.
5. The waste and recycling sector, a relatively small sector in terms of employment, accounted for three worker deaths in 2020/21. While this is the lowest number of deaths in this sector in each of the last five years, numbers are small and subject to year-on-year fluctuation. This sector has one of the highest rates of fatal injury to workers (around 17 times as high as the five-year-average all industry rate).
6. The construction sector accounted for the largest share of fatal injuries to workers in 2020/21 – 39. The annual average rate of fatal injury over the last five years in construction is around four times as high as the average across all industries, but considerably less than the rate in both agriculture; and waste and recycling.
7. Work-related fatal injuries: [Fatal injuries in Great Britain \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
8. Mesothelioma: [Mesothelioma statistics for Great Britain, 2020 \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
9. Latest HSE press releases: Latest press releases – [HSE Media Centre](#)

The post [HSE releases annual workplace fatality figures for 2020/21](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

Building Safety Bill introduced

The government has today (5 July) introduced the Building Safety Bill in the House of Commons.

The Building Safety Bill will implement recommendations made in Dame Judith Hackitt's 'Building a Safer Future' report which highlighted a need for significant cultural and regulatory change. The Bill also paves the way for the official formation of an independent Building Safety Regulator (BSR).

Peter Baker, Chief Inspector of Buildings at HSE, said:

"I welcome the introduction of the Building Safety Bill, which will give HSE the tools to deliver its important role as the Building Safety Regulator and is an important step in setting out what will be expected of future duty holders.

"Everyone involved in higher risk buildings from design, construction and day-to-day operations will manage and control building safety in a way that is proportionate to the risks. This will ensure these buildings are safer for those who live in them and they have a stronger voice. I encourage duty holders to use the Bill's introduction in preparation for the new, more rigorous regulatory regime.

"The Building Safety Regulator will continue to work with industry and others to deliver the new building safety regime to ensure that residents of higher risk buildings are safe, and feel safe, in their homes now and in the future."

(ends)

Read the government's press release on the Building Safety Bill here: www.gov.uk/government/news/new-regulator-at-heart-of-building-safety-overhaul

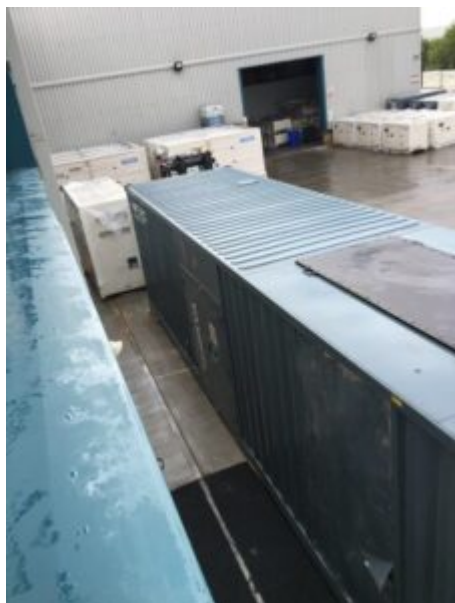
The Building Safety Bill can be found here: bills.parliament.uk/bills/3021

The post [Building Safety Bill introduced](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

Manufacturing company fined after workers exposed to asbestos

Power Link Machines (UK) Ltd was sentenced for safety breaches after the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was informed the company was using gaskets within its generator sets that contained asbestos.

Analysis by HSE's Science Division confirmed the gaskets contained asbestos. The company was served with a Prohibition Notice on 26 March 2018 requiring them to stop the use of these gaskets and ensure that they did not import any asbestos containing items.



Leeds Magistrates' Court heard that a second concern was received on 21 September 2018 stating that employees were being asked to work on a generator set, which contained gaskets which looked very similar to those found to contain asbestos earlier in the year. This unit had been imported from Power Link Machine (Shanghai) Co Ltd.

An investigation by HSE found that these gaskets also contained asbestos and as the generator set had been imported into this country, the company had breached the Prohibition Notice served in March 2018. The company subsequently allowed an untrained employee to remove these gaskets releasing asbestos fibres into the generator set and then asking two other employees to work within that generator set, exposing them to asbestos fibres.

Power Link Machines (UK) Ltd of Vickers Building, Hurricane Close, Sherburn in Elmet pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and breaching Regulation 9 (1) and Schedule 6, part 2, section 2 of the REACH enforcement regulations 2008. The company was fined £22,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,062.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Rachel Brittain said: "When materials that contain asbestos are disturbed or damaged, fibres are released into the air. When these fibres are inhaled, they can cause serious diseases.

"Had the company put robust checks in place to ensure that they were not importing asbestos containing materials, this incident would not have occurred."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/)^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>^[3]
4. Please see the link below to the page on HSE's website that is the best guide to doing it the right way:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/dangerous.htm>

The post [Manufacturing company fined after workers exposed to asbestos](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Warehouse management company fined after employee killed in electrical incident](#)

A warehouse management solutions company has been fined after an employee was electrocuted while servicing an air compressor.

Maidstone Magistrates' Court heard that on 8 December 2017, Andrew Meade was carrying out pre-planned maintenance on an air compressor at a distribution centre in Gravesend, when he was electrocuted. He was not found for more than an hour following the incident. His injuries were fatal.



An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the control measures in place to prevent contact with electricity during maintenance activities were not suitable or sufficient. The electrical systems had not been tested or visually inspected since installation, and an incorrect isolating switch had not been identified.

Logistex Limited of Kettering Parkway, Kettering, Northamptonshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company was fined £180,000 and ordered to pay full costs of £23,358.16.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Joanne Williams said: "Poorly maintained electrical installations and faulty electrical appliances can kill or severely injure people; and cause damage to property.

"This was a wholly avoidable incident, caused by the failure of the company to implement safe systems of work and identify the risks. Had the company identified the correct isolation point for the compressor and ensured that employees were sufficiently trained and supervised in the lock off procedures expected of them then this fatal incident would not have occurred."

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4. Guidance can be found on the HSE web site: hse.gov.uk/safemaintenance/permits.htm
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg253.htm

The post [Warehouse management company fined after employee killed in electrical incident](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Company fined after a worker was injured by a forklift truck](#)

A facility services company operating at Winchester prison has been fined after a worker suffered a broken leg when he was struck by a forklift truck (FLT).

Basingstoke Magistrates' Court heard that on 23 May 2019, the Gov Facility Services Limited employee was injured whilst carrying out inspections of drain covers adjacent to a workshop. He was struck by a FLT, breaking the bone in his right leg. The driver of the FLT was unloading boxes for a delivery to the canteen, his view was obscured by the load on the forks, preventing him from seeing the other employee.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident found that the company had failed to carry out the appropriate risk assessment to identify and implement risk control measures to ensure vehicles and pedestrians were not working at the same time in the same place.

Gov Facility Services Limited of Albany House, Petty France, London pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company was fined £15,000 and ordered to pay costs of £7,638.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Nicola Pinckney said: "This injury was easily preventable. Planning for transport safety and implementing safe working practices should avoid such incidents.

"Workplace transport is a significant hazard and the risks must be recognised and managed. There are simple and effective measures employers can take to help keep everyone safe.

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

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [Workplace transport safety – A guide to workplace transport safety \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk) legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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