

NATIONAL GRID GAS SENTENCED OVER MISSING GAS NETWORK RECORDS

National gas utility company National Grid Gas plc has been fined for failing to ensure its records relating to gas risers in some high-rise multi occupancy building were up to date.

Liverpool Crown Court previous heard that in June 2017 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) requested information from gas distribution network (GDN) companies about their management of gas networks in high rise multiple occupancy buildings (HRMOBs).

At the time of the offence National Grid Gas operated the nationwide gas transmission system and the gas distribution systems supplying gas to approximately half of the UK domestic and industrial gas customers, including the gas pipes in HRMOBs.

However, in 2016 National Grid Gas sold part of its operations to Cadent Gas Ltd, this included the activities which the failings relate to. HSE's investigation revealed the incomplete records were transferred to Cadent by National Grid Gas when they sold their gas networks to Cadent. The system had not been subject to any audits or reviews when the records issue came to light in December 2017. As such Cadent were continuing to inspect only the buildings on the existing database.

After HSE had requested the information, it found that Cadent's management records were incomplete and found that records on 769 buildings were missing, meaning gas risers in these HRMOBs had not been subject to a condition survey, inspection or routine maintenance for a number of years.

Additionally, the investigation found that National Grid Gas had failed to ensure that 112 HRMOBs had Pipeline Isolation Valves (PIVs) so that gas to these buildings could be isolated in the event of an incident.

As a result of this, HSE undertook a criminal investigation that considered the risk that residents and members of the public were exposed to as a result of breaches to Health and Safety legislation. Enforcement notices were issued in April 2018 requiring Cadent to take remedial action. Cadent took appropriate action and complied with the notices by September 2018.

National Grid Gas plc of 1-3 Strand, London, WC2N 5EH pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 on 06 November 2020. Today they were fined £4 million with £91,805 costs at Liverpool Crown Court.

After the hearing, HM principal inspector for HSE, Julie Voce said: "This case had wide ranging implications. Our investigations found that people living and working in the high-rise buildings where the failings took place were not protected from the risk of gas leaks.

“National Grid Gas did not have a robust system for recording the details of the gas pipes within these buildings. Opportunities arose where National Grid Gas identified data errors, but these were never satisfactorily acted upon, and opportunities to correct the situation were missed.

“This sentence reflects how important it is when companies are charged with ensuring records that could keep people safe and well are up to date, that they make that task a priority.”

ENDS

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. www.hse.gov.uk

2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

4. In 2018 Ofgem commenced its own investigation into breaches of licence conditions. The findings of the Ofgem investigation were published in May 2019 and Cadent paid a financial penalty to Ofgem of £24 million and agreed to set up a community fund of £20 million to support customers in vulnerable circumstances.

The post [NATIONAL GRID GAS SENTENCED OVER MISSING GAS NETWORK RECORDS](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Worker fell to his death through fragile asbestos roof](#)

A roofer was fatally injured when he fell six metres whilst working on a replacement roof at a property in Kirkdale, Liverpool.

Liverpool Crown Court heard how on 22 May 2017, the roofer was completing snagging work on a replacement roof. The worker had accessed a part of the old roof made of fragile asbestos cement sheets, which gave way. He fell through the sheets to the ground below sustaining fatal injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the area accessed did not have safety nets fitted and the building occupier failed to take reasonably practicable measures to reduce the risk to those working on the roof.

Owners of the building Pearsons Glass, of Maddrell Street, Liverpool, pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, sections 3. The company was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,656.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Andrew McGrory said: “The risks from working on fragile surfaces are well known.

“Businesses have a responsibility to ensure that the contractor they select to undertake any construction work devise safe methods of doing so, which should include providing the necessary information to their workers and ensuring that they are adequately supervised.”

The prosecution of the roofing contractor is ongoing.

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[Spot checks and inspections on businesses are taking place in Slough](#)

HSE is working with Slough Borough Council to carry out spot check calls, visits and inspections on businesses in Slough to check they have COVID-secure measures in place.

To protect workers, visitors and customers, businesses must make sure they have put measures in place and everyone is following them to manage the risk from coronavirus.

HSE will be calling and visiting businesses from all different sectors in the area to check they are following the government guidelines, this will be starting on Monday 08 February.

Slough Borough Councillor, Pavita K Mann, lead member of Planning and Regulatory Services, said: “We will be talking to local businesses and visiting and inspecting sites across Slough to understand how they are managing risks in line with their specific business activity.

“Becoming COVID-secure needs to be the priority for all businesses. It is a legal duty for businesses to protect their workers and others from harm and this includes taking reasonable steps to control the risk and protect people from coronavirus.

“This means making business adjustments to become COVID-secure. We advise employers to work with their employees when implementing changes, to help increase confidence with workers, customers and the local community.”

Being COVID-secure means businesses need to keep up to date with the latest guidance and put measures in place to manage the risk and protect workers, visitors and customers.

During the calls and visits, HSE provides advice and guidance, but where businesses are not managing the risk, immediate action will be taken.

Angela Storey, Director of Transformation and Operational Services at HSE, said: “Across the country we are working with local authorities, like Slough Borough Council, to check businesses are COVID-secure and providing support and advice where needed.

“Our spot checks and inspections support the cross-government work in helping employers and employees at work during the pandemic.

“All workplaces are in scope for spot checks which means businesses of any size, in any sector can receive an unannounced check from HSE or an inspection from the local authority, to check they are COVID-secure.

“If you are contacted by the HSE or your local authority, please engage with us.

“By making sure that businesses have measures in place to manage the risks, we can benefit the health of local communities as well as support the local and national UK economy.”

Please ensure your workplace is safe by following the guidance on [being COVID-secure](#). Further information on [spot checks and inspections](#) is available on our website.

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2. HSE news releases are available at <https://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. For HSE’s working safely guidance

see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm>

The post [Spot checks and inspections on businesses are taking place in Slough](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Company fined after workers injured in forklift truck crash](#)

A carpet sample book manufacturer has been fined after two workers were seriously injured in an incident where a forklift truck crashed into an onsite refuse skip.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how on 29 July 2019, three workers at Profile Patterns Limited had been emptying waste from plastic bins at their site in Wigan. They were using a forklift truck to raise the bins to a height that enabled a worker at either side of the truck to manually tip the bins into a skip. When one of the bins became trapped between the side of the skip and the forks, the driver of the forklift truck climbed on top of the skip to free the bin whilst the other two employees remained standing at either side of the forklift truck. Another employee was asked to reverse the forklift truck to aid the release of the bin.

However, after reversing, the forklift truck then moved forward crashing into the skip causing the employee on top of the skip to fall. One of the workers standing at the side of the truck became impaled by her right arm by the fork. The two workers sustained serious fractures that required hospital treatment.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Profile Patterns Limited did not take effective measures to ensure the health and safety of employees in relation to the risks arising from the use and operation of forklift trucks. The company failed to implement a safe system of work and provide adequate instruction and training to employees. It was established that tipping bins into the skip in this way was normal working practice that had taken place over a considerable length of time, throughout which employees were placed at significant risk.

Profile Patterns Limited of Makerfield Way, Ince Wigan, Lancashire, pleaded guilty to breaching sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £238.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Emily Osborne said: "The risk of injury from this unsafe working practice was foreseeable and the incident could so easily have been avoided."

“Profile Patterns Limited should have put in place a number of safety measures including appropriate segregation of vehicles and pedestrians and a safe system of work for emptying the bins.

“Those in control of work also have a responsibility to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in order to carry out work safely.”

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

4. More information about safe use of work place vehicles can be found at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/>

The post [Company fined after workers injured in forklift truck crash](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Construction company and plastering firm fined after employee falls from height](#)

Two companies have been fined after a worker sustained serious injuries by falling approximately three metres through a hole cut into a floor during the refurbishment of a property at in Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

Chelmsford Magistrates’ Court heard how on 27 July 2017, an employee was working as a dry liner for R&B Plastering Limited, who were contracted on the site to Robert Norman Construction Limited, the Principal Contractor (PC).

The employee was working on the second floor of the property, near to a hole that had been cut into the floor to facilitate plaster board being passed up from the level below. The employee fell approximately three metres through the hole, causing him to sustain fractures to his vertebrae and ribs, and severe bruising.

He required hospitalisation for nineteen days and had to wear a back brace for six months. He also suffers ongoing physical and psychological issues as

a result of the incident.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the hole was not adequately protected via covering or access. R&B Plastering Limited had put a risk assessment in place for the work, but it was not adequate, and was not provided to the PC prior to work commencing.

The PC's own policy outlined the need to review any sub-contractors' risk assessments prior to them starting work; and by failing to follow this policy the PC missed any opportunity to review R&B Plastering's risk assessment.

Robert Norman Construction Limited of Framlingham, Suffolk were found guilty in their absence to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and have been fined £140,000 and ordered to pay costs of £8,426.

R&B Plastering Limited of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and have been fined £26,700 and ordered to pay costs of £8,426.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Prentiss Clarke-Jones said: "The employee's injuries are life-changing and he could have easily been killed. The incident could have been avoided if both companies had fully implemented safe systems of work and identified, during the planning stages, that materials would need to be safely transported between floors.

"Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work-related injuries in this country, and the controls needed to prevent the associated risks are well known. Dutyholders should follow the guidance on planning works to ensure that risks such as this work at height can be eliminated in the first instance by allowing safe means of access."

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. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)

2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at:

www.legislation.gov.uk

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

4. Further guidance can be found:

Managing Health and Safety in Construction: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l153.htm>

Working at Height – A Brief Guide: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf>

Preventing injuries during plasterboard handling: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cis76.pdf>

Preventing falls down internal voids:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/lwit/assets/downloads/voids.pdf>

The post [Construction company and plastering firm fined after employee falls](#)

[from height](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).