

Company fined as worker suffers serious burns

A company has been fined after a worker sustained serious burns to their body.

Carl Lowery had been working on new apartment blocks at The Crescent, Hulme Street, Salford when an electrical flash blew him backwards and burnt his arms and face on 12 May 2020.

The then 37-year-old underwent multiple surgeries following the incident and required a skin graft from his thigh.

The incident happened almost three years after Carl lost his son Bradley to a rare form of cancer. Along with his wife Gemma, Carl established the Bradley Lowery Foundation, which helps families that are fundraising to obtain medical equipment and treatment.

Carl, now 41, had been working alongside a colleague at SRE Cabling and Jointing Limited, with the company sub-contracted by Aberla M&E Limited to carry out cabling and jointing works on the new apartments.



Carl Lowery

The pair were working on the building's main switchboard, with nearby bus bars left live with electricity and covered by a guard panel.

However, a gap in the guard panel led to a nut rolling behind and coming into contact with the live bus bars, causing an electrical flash which blew Carl backwards and burnt his arms and face.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation into this incident found Aberla M&E Limited had incorrectly assumed the guard panel was sufficient separation of the workers from the live bus bars. The company failed to take into account a gap in the guard panel, which risked nuts, bolts, tools and even fingers coming into contact with the bus bars. There was also a failure to issue a permit to work (PTW) on or near live components, which resulted in the main switchboard being left live. There was also a distinct lack of live works monitoring by the company, with the electrical site manager rarely visiting the work area.

Carl said in his victim personal statement: "Even when Bradley was poorly I worked. I've not been able to work since the accident either, mentally or

physically.

“My left hand is my dominant hand and after the accident I had no grip. I had to try and learn how to use my non-dominant hand.”

HSE guidance states employers must produce a risk assessment prior to working with electricity. The risk assessment must cover who could be harmed by electrical hazards, how the level of risk has been established and the precautions taken to control the risk. More on this can be found at: [Electrical safety – HSE](#)

Aberla M&E Limited, of The Parklands, Bolton, Greater Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay £20,000 in costs at Manchester Magistrates’ Court on 14 March 2024.

HSE inspector Lisa Bailey said: “This incident has had life-changing consequences for Carl and his family. It could have been avoided if the company had actively monitored and managed procedures, to identify risks and prevent incidents.

“Working with electricity is a high-risk activity and safety must be a priority. Proper planning to ensure that risks are eliminated at system design stage is essential.”

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.

[Company fined after worker fractures skull](#)

A solar panel installation company has been fined after a worker fell and sustained life-changing injuries.

The worker, employed by Everyone’s Energy UK Limited, had been installing solar panels on the roof of a house on Pentland Avenue in Thornbury, South Gloucestershire when he fell three metres on 4 July 2022.

It is believed the 41-year-old had been carrying materials up a ladder when he fell.



He landed at the foot of the ladder and suffered a fractured skull, leading to a severe brain injury. He is now unable to walk or talk.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Everyone's Energy UK Limited had failed to properly plan, manage, and monitor the work at height. The company had not provided adequate scaffolding around the roof and there was no appropriate means to raise the materials onto the roof.



HSE guidance states that employers and self-employed contractors must assess the risks, take precautions and issue clear method statements for everyone who will work at height. More on this can be found at: [Construction – Working at height industry health & safety \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction-working-at-height/)

Everyone's Energy UK Limited, of Old London Road, Hertford, Hertfordshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 . The company was fined £28,000 and ordered to pay £6,634.56 in costs at Bristol Magistrates' Court on 12 March 2024.

HSE inspector Ian Whittles said: "This serious incident could have been avoided if the employer had acted to identify and control the risks involved and provided a safe means of getting the materials onto the roof."

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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>
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[INEOS fined after employee seriously injured](#)

INEOS has been fined £400,000 after an employee was seriously injured while carrying out a routine task at its chemicals site in Grangemouth, Scotland.

The worker, 47, was attempting to clear a sump that contained a caustic solution on 25 November 2019. However, he fell into the sump due to inadequate grating and sustained severe burn injuries.

The sump had needed emptying as its contents had reached the high-level design threshold the day before on 24 November.

After laying out various hoses in preparation of emptying the sump, the worker then entered the sump area.



Photo of sump with grating in place taken shortly

after the incident

While in the sump area, the worker stepped onto the corner of the grating with his right leg.

The grating however gave way, with the worker's right leg falling into the sump and becoming saturated with the caustic solution. He was submerged in the solution for three seconds before pulling himself out of the sump and was later treated at the burns unit at St John's Hospital in Livingston.

The man sustained permanent scarring to his right leg and was in pain for four weeks following the incident before returning to work in the December.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation into this incident found INEOS had failed to undertake a risk assessment of the work involved. There was also no safe system of work in place. The grating was not secured and there were no barriers in place to prevent a fall into the sump.



Ejector pump and hoses were placed in the sump area prior to the incident

HSE guidance on risk assessments states employers, or an appointed competent person, must identify hazards before work takes place, before assessing and controlling the risks involved. Findings should then be recorded, with employers then urged to review the control measures they have implemented to ensure they are working. More on this can be found at: [Managing risks and risk assessment at work – Overview -HSE](#)

INEOS Chemicals Grangemouth Limited, of Chapel Lane, Lyndhurst, Hampshire, pleaded guilty to an offence under Section 2(1) and Section 33(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £400,000 at Falkirk Sheriff Court on 8 March 2024.

HSE inspector Lindsey Stein said: “The duties on employers to undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of risks and to provide a safe system of work are absolute within health and safety legislation and well understood. The dangerous properties of caustic are widely known and this incident could so easily have been avoided with the implementation of straightforward control measures identified through assessment.”

Debbie Carroll, who leads on health and safety investigations for the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), said: “This accident could have been avoided had the risks been recognised and appropriate systems of work put in place in ensuring workers were protected from harm when working in this area.

“Ineos Chemicals Grangemouth Limited’s failure to assess the risks posed resulted in the severe injury and permanent disfigurement of one of their workers.

“This prosecution should remind duty holders that a failure to manage and implement effective measures can have serious consequences and they will be held accountable for this failure.”

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[International Women’s Day: ‘Louder voice’ from women will help everyone at work, watchdog bosses say](#)

Two of the Government’s most senior officials regulating industry believe the ‘louder voice’ from a new generation of women will make everyone at work feel more comfortable.

Sarah Albon and Lisa Pinney MBE say that while progress has been made, women working in heavy industry today are still provided with ill-fitting protective equipment and unsuitable welfare facilities while working on site.

The chief executives of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Coal Authority respectively, regulating traditionally male-dominated sectors, were speaking ahead of International Women's Day.

"As more and more women join these industries, they'll become a louder voice," said Sarah Albon, who leads HSE.



Lisa Pinney (centre) with Sarah Albon (right)

"With just little bit of thought – and you see our best companies do this – more places can make those extra few steps, not to make a woman feel that she has to ask, or somebody is doing her a favour, but just to make her feel as comfortable and on an equal footing with all of her male colleagues," she continued.

Improving conditions on site will benefit men too, Sarah Albon added: "Because when I look at some of these sites, I'd say it's not suitable for anyone. But it's the fact that women are coming in and looking at it, perhaps with 21st century eyes and saying, 'you expect me to put up with that?' "

"Men have perhaps just become ingrained and used to it in those heavy industries over decades and decades. But that right to have dignity at work, it applies to all of us, men and women."



"You feel like you're wearing a tent"

Lisa Pinney, chief executive of the Coal Authority, sympathised with how

difficult not being comfortable at work can be. “It’s so much about confidence. If you’re meeting on site or if you’re doing something and you’ve got sleeves down to the floor and feel like you’re wearing a tent, it really affects your confidence in terms of being able to do the best job that you can do.”

Both women started their careers when they were in a significant minority, and overcame barriers to progress.

But the inequality once denied Lisa a job: “I didn’t get a job once because they didn’t have women’s toilets. I was the top candidate, but they wouldn’t have me on site.”

“We have come a long way”, added Sarah, “but we’ve still got a long way to go.”



A-Winning, in Derbyshire

Enabling Net Zero

A wide-ranging discussion between the pair covered a range of different topics including the role each organisation plays in protecting the environment. They were talking at a site run by the Coal Authority, where water from abandoned mines was being treated before entering the wider water system.

Sarah Albon said: “One of the things that we at HSE, and here at the Coal Authority we can offer is being really part of that next wave of technology, safe Net Zero technologies and thinking about how we can all do our bit for climate change – and doing that in a safe way.”

Lisa Pinney said: “Public safety is the absolute ethos of both our organisations.”

Marking big anniversaries

Over the next 12 months, both HSE and the Coal Authority will mark significant milestones. It will soon be 50 years since HSE was formed on 1 January 1975, and 30 years since the Coal Authority was borne out of the Coal Board.

Sarah Albon said: “We’re enormously proud that generations of people working in HSE over the last 50 years have made huge strides in improving the safety of Britain’s workforce – we’re one of the safest countries to work in now.

“As we push forward into the next 50 years, we’re wanting to bring that same effort into health as we’ve done in safety. We’re still seeing people unnecessarily made ill through the work that they do.”

Lisa Pinney said: “It’s about celebrating our journey. We were created to support the coal industry when it was privatised, and to deal with some of the challenges around that. Over the last 30 years we’ve seen so much change, things like treating mine water, protecting drinking water and into the future thinking about opportunities like mine water heat.”

The pair were speaking on visit to the A-Winning mine water treatment site in Derbyshire, a scheme operated by the Coal Authority, of which Lisa Pinney is the chief executive.

Their full conversation has been converted into a 15-minute podcast which can be found here: <https://spotifyanchor-web.app.link/e/g7IUk9WaxHb>.

About HSE

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www.hse.gov.uk

About the Coal Authority

The Coal Authority works to make a better future for people and the environment in mining areas. It manages Britain’s coal mining legacy and, as a 24/7 emergency response organisation, responds to public safety and subsidence incidents caused by historical coal mining.

As part of the Coal Authority’s work to enhance the environment, over 80 mine water treatment schemes are operated with the capacity to treat 220 billion of litres of water each year, helping to protect rivers and vital drinking water supplies.

The Coal Authority’s work is helping to develop a new sustainable source of

renewable energy for the UK. By harnessing the heat from the water within former mine workings, it hopes to play a key role in helping the UK to meet net zero targets by 2050.

Skills and information are also used to provide services to other government departments and agencies, local governments and commercial partners. By sharing knowledge and expertise, the Coal Authority supports the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments to create safer, cleaner and greener nations for all.

More information on the Coal Authority and its work can be found at:
www.gov.uk/coalauthority

Metal recycling company fined £200,000 after employee's arm severed

A scrap metal recycling company in Essex has been fined £200,000 after an employee's arm was severed when it became entangled in a catalytic converter sampling machine.

Elena Troia was working for F.J. Church and Sons Ltd at its recycling facility in Rainham, Essex, on 12 June 2021 when she passed her hand through an unguarded rotary valve to remove a blockage.

The valve closed, trapping and severing the 34-year-old's right arm. Ms Troia's right arm was later amputated as a result of the incident and she has been unable to work since.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that F.J. Church and Sons failed to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery, namely the rotating parts of a rotary valve inside the sampling machine.



HSE guidance states employers must take effective measures to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery. This will normally be by fixed guarding but where routine access is needed, interlocked guards (sometimes with guard locking) may be needed to stop the movement of dangerous parts before a person can reach the danger zone. Further guidance can be found here: [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/laws/puwr/)

F.J. Church and Sons Ltd, of Centenary Works, Manor Way, Rainham, Essex, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay £5,125.37 in costs at Stratford Magistrates' Court on 5 March 2024.



HSE inspector Marcus Pope said: "Every year, a significant proportion of accidents, many of them serious and sometimes fatal, occur as a result of poorly guarded work equipment. In this case this was a wholly avoidable incident, caused by the failure to guard dangerous parts. Had the company added suitable guarding to the outlet of the machine, this life-changing injury would not have occurred."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Jon Mack and paralegal officer Lucy Gallagher.

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