

Valero Energy UK fined £5 million after four people died in an oil explosion

Valero Energy UK Ltd and B&A Contracts Ltd have been fined after an explosion killed four workers and seriously injured another at an oil refinery in Pembrokeshire in 2011.

Dennis Riley, 52, Robert Broome, 48, Andrew Jenkins, 33, and Julie Jones, 54, died after a storage tank exploded at the site. Andrew Philips also sustained major injuries.

Swansea Crown Court heard how on, 2 June 2011, the five workers were emptying a tank in the Amine Recovery Unit using a vacuum tanker when the explosion and subsequent fire took place shortly after 6pm. B & A Contracts Ltd, which was a long-term contractor at the refinery, was carrying out the work, with support from another contractor, Hertel.

The explosion resulted in a fireball which severed the 5-tonne tank roof, and this was projected 55 metres to impact against a butane storage sphere. The roof narrowly missed a pipe track where a range of flammable materials were carried.





An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive found the explosion was most likely to have been initiated by the ignition of a highly flammable atmosphere within the tank, during what should have been a routine emptying operation in preparation for further cleaning and maintenance.

The investigation also found there had been longstanding failures within the refinery safety management systems and as a result the risks posed by flammable atmospheres within the Amine Recovery Unit were not understood or controlled.

At the time of the incident the refinery was operated by Chevron Limited, but ownership changed in August 2011 when the sale to Valero was completed.

Valero Energy UK Ltd of Wood Street, London, pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company have been fined £5 million and ordered to pay costs of £1 million.

B & A Contracts Ltd of Hubberston Road, Pembrokeshire pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. They have been fined £120,000 and ordered to pay costs of £40,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Andrew Knowles said: "This incident, which had devastating consequences for all of those involved, was entirely preventable. Many opportunities to take action to control risk were missed, that would have prevented the incident from occurring. It is important to realise that the incident could have had even more serious consequences had the butane sphere or pipe track been damaged by the flying tank roof.

Detective Superintendent Anthony Griffiths said:

“Officers from Dyfed-Powys Police worked closely with the Health and Safety Executive to support them in the very complex investigation to establish the cause of this tragic incident. We hope that the lessons learned ensure that a tragedy of this nature doesn’t happen again. Our thoughts remain with all the families involved.”

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>

The post [Valero Energy UK fined £5 million after four people died in an oil explosion](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Yorkshire company fined after worker killed](#)

Leeds-based garden shed manufacturing company, Woodlands Homecare Ltd, was today sentenced for safety breaches after a worker was killed.

Leeds Magistrates’ Court heard how, on 23 July 2012, the worker was pushing a trolley when he was struck by a side loader fork lift truck (FLT) that had been unloading a delivery wagon at the time of the incident.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the FLT was unloading a delivery wagon at the time of the accident. As the worker passed a ventilation system cyclone the reversing FLT struck him.

Woodlands Homecare Ltd of Railway House, Calverley Lane, Rodley, Leeds pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £233,334.00 with £21,620 costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Rachel Brittain commented: “This was a tragic and wholly avoidable incident, caused by the failure of the company to implement the findings of their own transport plan.

“Vehicles at work continue to be a major cause of fatal and major injuries. Every year there are over 5000 incidents involving transport in the workplace. About 50 of these result in people being killed.”

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

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

[Woodwork company fined after persistent failure to guard and maintain equipment](#)

Ashwell Recycled Timber Products Limited has been fined following repeated failures to safely guard and maintain woodwork equipment used by their employees.

Barkingside Magistrates’ Court heard how employees had been exposed to the risk of serious injury because their radial arm drill was not fitted with an effective telescopic guard or trip device, and the housing on a re-saw blade and self-return function on their cross-cut saw had not been maintained. These failures were found despite the company having received previous enforcement action from HSE on similar issues.

Ashwell Recycled Timber Products Limited of Wick Place Farm, Bulphan, Upminster, pleaded guilty to two breaches of Regulation 5(1) and one of Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and have been fined £12,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,831.75.

Speaking after the case HSE inspector Dominic Elliss said “In this case, the company completely failed to grasp the importance of installing and

maintaining basic but essential guards to prevent access to the dangerous parts of woodworking machinery.

“Companies should be aware that HSE may bring prosecutions where dutyholders continually fail to address risks in the workplace. Woodworking machinery relies on the provision and ongoing maintenance of suitable guards to prevent significant injuries occurring, and businesses should take this opportunity to review their own arrangements and ensure they are sufficiently robust.”

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3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Guidance can be found here:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis36.pdf> –
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg129.pdf>
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l114.pdf>

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[Council fined after obvious risk to employees ignored](#)

The national regulator for workplace health and safety has said Hull City Council failed to address the “obvious risk” of employees working on ice before a worker fell and suffered broken ribs while re-laying ice at The Hull Ice Arena.

Hull Crown Court heard that on 30 August 2014 a worker was marking the lines for the ice hockey pitch at the venue on Kingston Street. He was walking towards the centre of the ice rink when he slipped and fell heavily onto the ice, suffering head injuries and breaking three ribs.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found there had been a number of previous incidents of employees slipping and falling on ice.

Hull City Council of The Guildhall, Alfred Gelder Street, Hull pleaded guilty

to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £185,000 with ££44,442.71 costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Denise Fotheringham commented: “No effective measures had been taken to reduce the risks of employees working on ice.

“Measures could have included providing systems of work that avoided the need for working on ice in the first place. Where this was not reasonably practicable, providing suitable footwear for working on slippery surfaces such as ice would have been an appropriate measure against a quite obvious risk.”

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[HSE proud to fly Suffrage Flag over Buxton laboratory](#)

Britain’s regulator for workplace health and safety celebrated 100 years of votes for women by flying the women’s Suffrage Flag over its world leading laboratory in Buxton.

On Monday 15 October 2018 HSE hosted the Suffrage Flag relay event, one of the UK Government celebrations to mark the 100 year anniversary of some women obtaining the vote.

Over the course of 2018 the Suffrage Flag is travelling around government departments and agencies across the UK. The flag is purple, green and white, the colours of the Women's Social and Political Union or Suffragettes, white for purity, purple for dignity and green for hope.

To mark the occasion staff held an EqualiTea morning, during which a display of archive material on women's contribution to health and safety at work over the last 100 years was celebrated.

Special guests included local MP Ruth George, representatives from the Safety and Reliability Society and local charity Crossroads Derbyshire (formerly High Peak Women's Aid), Sheila Pantry (editor of 'Women of Courage') and local historian Alan Roberts.

The event also raised funds for Crossroads Derbyshire, which covers the whole of the High Peak, and works with more than 500 families each year who are escaping domestic abuse.

Dr Karen Russ, Director of HSE Science said: "We were immensely proud to have hosted this event. It was a celebration that brought together so many people reflecting our pride at the laboratory being based in this wonderful location. We had the opportunity to discuss the impact women have had on science and regulation in HSE, equality at work and increasing the number of women working in science and engineering."

Vicky Bunnage, Business Officer at Crossroads Derbyshire said: "Thank you so much to all at HSE for inviting us along to this event and raising funds to support women experiencing abuse here in the High Peak. It was great to be part of the celebration of some women getting the vote and we would like to thank the HSE and all the organisers for including us."

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2. Further details on this Government initiative can be found at <https://civilservice.blog.gov.uk/2018/02/07/how-the-civil-service-is-celebrating-the-centenary-of-womens-suffrage/>

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