

# Drinks giant fined after worker sustains serious burns

An international drinks manufacturer has been fined half a million pounds after an employee sustained burns to over 30% of his body.

The mechanical engineer had been repairing a defective pump at Diageo's Glenlossie Distillery Complex in Elgin on 24 March 2021 when he was burned by pot ale.

The liquid, which had a temperature of 104 degrees Celsius, came out suddenly and unexpectedly from a pipe.

The worker sustained burns to his arms, hands, shoulders, back, chest, lower legs and ankles, before spending two weeks in intensive care where he was placed in an induced coma.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found Diageo failed to do all that was reasonably practicable to ensure maintenance operations could be carried out without a worker being put at risk of injury.

HSE guidance on the safe isolation of plant and equipment is freely available and provides steps to prevent the release of substances that are hazardous including hot, flammable and toxic substances. The guidance can be found at [The safe isolation of plant and equipment – HSG253](#)



The incident took place at Diageo's Glenlossie Distillery Complex

Diageo Scotland Limited, of Lochside Place, Edinburgh, pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(c), 33(1)(a) and 33(1)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £500,000 at Inverness Sheriff Court on 16 December 2024.

HSE inspector Isabelle Martin said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by ensuring that procedures were in place to ensure that changes to work equipment installed in the plant were safe. However, more importantly Diageo should have had procedures in place to ensure that plant could be isolated safely and prevent the release of hazardous and dangerous substances.

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

**Further information:**

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.

3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
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## [Company fined after worker “full of hopes and dreams” dies at wind farm construction site](#)

An engineering company has been fined after a labourer died during the construction of a wind farm on the Shetland Islands.



Picture of Liam MacDonald

Liam MacDonald, from Tain, Ross-shire, lost his life on the morning of 5 June 2022 while removing dried concrete from a skip at the Viking site on Upper Kergord.

His mother has said the 23-year-old was “full of hopes and dreams” and is now missed “beyond words.”

Mr MacDonald, an agency worker who had started working on the site just over a month earlier on 4 May 2022, had been using a hammer to chip away the concrete when the skip’s bale arm fell on top of him.

The 23-year-old was found motionless with the skip’s bale arm pinned against his chest, which led to an alarm being raised at the site.

Colleagues subsequently performed CPR on Mr MacDonald, before administering a defibrillator, but he was sadly pronounced dead at the scene by the emergency services.

Jackie Randell, the investigating inspector from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), found the principal contractor BAM Nuttall failed to secure the bale arm from falling.

The HSE investigation found the company had failed to identify the risks of the bale arm falling and failed to put in place a safe system of work to ensure that anyone using, maintaining or cleaning the skip would be protected from harm

Wendy Robson, Mr MacDonald's mother, said: "Liam loved life, his family and friends. He was just at the start of his adult life, still finding who he was, and full of hopes and dreams.

"We have been robbed of having Liam here today, and in all our tomorrows, and in sharing those dreams with him. We will never meet the children he so wanted to have one day.



Picture of skip

"We can't adequately describe who Liam was, and what he means to us. We love and miss him beyond words."

BAM Nuttall Limited, of Knoll Road, Camberley, Surrey, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 33(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £800k with a £60k victim surcharge at Inverness Sheriff Court on 18 December 2024.

Jackie Randell said: "This was a tragic incident which led to the death of a young man. Our thoughts remain with Mr MacDonald's friends and family at this time.

"BAM Nuttall had failed in its duty to ensure the safety of their workforce. This prosecution should serve as a reminder for all contractors to implement suitable risk assessments and safe systems of work.

"We thoroughly investigated this incident, with our findings identifying that BAM Nuttall had failed in its duty to ensure the safety of their workforce.

This prosecution should serve as a reminder for all contractors to implement suitable risk assessments and safe systems of work.

“Up to date safety information provided by manufacturers of work equipment must be reviewed as part of this risk assessment process. It is of crucial importance that safety information from manufacturers is highlighted to the workforce and rigorous monitoring is carried out to ensure that everyone is kept safe.”

Debbie Carroll, who leads on health and safety investigations for the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) said: “The death of Liam MacDonald could have been prevented if BAM Nuttall Limited had suitably and sufficiently assessed the risks involved in the maintenance and cleaning of the concrete column skip at the site.

“Their failure to identify the hazards represented by the skip’s bale arm and ensuring that it was secured prior to the cleaning operation beginning led to Mr MacDonald’s death.

“My thoughts are with his family and friends at this difficult time.”

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5. Further guidance can be found at: [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) – HSE](#)

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## **[Fine for fairground operator after man ‘everyone fell in love with’ dies](#)**

A fairground operator has been fined after a man ‘everyone fell in love with’ died weeks after suffering serious head injuries while working on a ride in South Shields.

Dean Cariss was struck by a moving car on a rollercoaster ride while daily testing and maintenance was being carried out at Ocean Beach Pleasure Park on

19 March 2023.

The 52-year-old sustained severe head injuries and as a result died in hospital 13 days later.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that Premier Attractions Limited had failed to ensure the health and safety of employees. The company pleaded guilty and was fined £28,000 at South Tyneside Magistrates Court on 17 December 2024.



Dean Cariss was struck by a moving car on a rollercoaster ride at Ocean Beach Pleasure Park

Mr Cariss, who had been with his partner Helen Wright for more than 15 years, was also a step father to Helen's three grown-up children, as well as being a step grandparent to nine.

In a written statement provided to the court, Helen said: "Dean had a fantastic relationship with my kids.

"He also idolised his grandchildren, and treated them like his own.

"He was bubbly and fun and would do daft things with them.

"He was very generous and liked to help people."

That helpful and generous nature also included him acting as Helen's carer for several years.

"My whole life has been turned upside down and back to front," she went on to say.

"He would move heaven and earth for me.

"He was a big personality and I miss the fun and laughter.

"Silence is deafening when I am in the house on my own.

"Everybody fell in love with him when they met him. There was no serious side, just laughter and fun."

The investigation by HSE found that Premier Attractions Limited had failed to ensure the health and safety of employees. It was found that a suitable and

sufficient risk assessment had not been carried out and proper controls had not been employed to prevent employees accessing dangerous areas whilst the ride was operating.

Premier Attractions Limited of Little Hulton, Manchester, pleaded guilty to failing to comply with section 2(1) of The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 – an offence contrary to s.33(1)(a) of that Act. They were fined £28,000 and ordered to pay £5,976 costs.

HSE Inspector William Gilroy said: “This tragic incident led to the avoidable death of a caring, family man.

“Dean’s death could easily have been prevented if his employer had acted to identify and manage the risks involved, and to put a safe system of work in place.

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

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## **[Council fined after employees exposed to risks from vibrating tools](#)**

A worker who repaired potholes was diagnosed with Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS), an occupational disease, following repeated exposure to vibration tools.

This week, his employer, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has been fined following a prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Sheffield Magistrates’ Court heard the employee worked in the road maintenance department, carrying out tasks including repairing potholes, for

more than 20 years, using vibrating tools.

Prolonged and regular exposure to vibration can affect a worker's health resulting in painful and disabling disorders of the nerves, blood supply, joints and muscles of the hands and arms. These disorders are collectively known as Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS). The risk of onset or worsening of HAVS increases with daily exposure and varies widely between individuals. HSE guidance can be found [here](#).

Employers are legally obliged to report cases of HAVS to HSE. The HSE investigation revealed that despite the worker in question receiving this diagnosis in April 2005, he continued to work with vibrating tools for a further 14 years.

The employee had been subject to regular health surveillance whilst employed by the Council, which had included recommendations on limiting exposure. However despite the report of April 2019, little action was taken to address the issues identified. Only once the HSE investigation had started in late 2019 was the man told to stop using vibrating tools.

The investigation also found that other employees continued to work with vibrating tools after they had been diagnosed.

While a system of Occupational Health surveillance was in place, it was inadequate as there was either no implementation, or inconsistent implementation, of the recommendations and actions to be taken. Recommendations following health surveillance of employees wasn't acted upon or used to identify risks.

The investigation found that the data used to calculate the vibration exposure grossly underestimated the vibration magnitude of the tools in use, and also relied upon accurate times being entered by staff. Workers were incentivised to continue using vibrating tools through a bonus scheme and overtime work which inevitably led to high levels of exposure. Workers were allowed to work up to the recommended Exposure Limit value (ELV), and in light of the inaccurate data inevitably worked beyond it on a regular basis. They were then only moved to other tasks when their health deteriorated.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council pleaded guilty to an offence contrary to Section 33(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, for their failure to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees in accordance with section 2(1) of the Act. On Tuesday 17 December, the Council was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay full costs of £5,775.70.

Following the hearing Kate Harney, enforcement lawyer for HSE said: "Rotherham Council had been exposing employees to the risks arising from the use of vibrating tools for a significant period of time. They fell below expected standards and appropriate enforcement was taken by the HSE.

"This was also not an isolated incident, with other staff working in the council's road maintenance division also exposed to risks to their health,



due to an unhealthy working culture where these exposures inadequately monitored.

“We urge those responsible for work using vibration tools to please check our freely available guidance.”

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5. HAVS is an occupational disease reportable under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

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## [Engineering company fined after ‘caring and loving’ man killed](#)

A Blackburn-based engineering company has been fined £xxx after a man described as ‘caring and loving’ by his family was killed after being crushed under a machine.

Connor Borthwick, from Wigan, was working for Partwell Special Steels Limited at its site in Bruce Street when the incident happened on 25 November 2021.

The 22-year-old and another employee were moving a large cutting press machine across a workshop floor when it became unbalanced, resulting in Connor being fatally crushed.



Connor Borthwick was just 22 when he was killed at work

Speaking on behalf of the family, his sister Emily said Connor was her “amazing, caring, loving and funny little brother”.

“Everyone loved Connor,” she said.

“He was a good soul, and this was evident from the more than 700 people who came to his funeral to pay their respects and share their personal accounts of how Connor had touched their lives.

“He was 22, life hadn’t begun for him, and it was over.

“Some simple steps should have been taken and weren’t, if they were Connor would be with us today.

“It’s hard to explain to people what we have been through, are going through. We don’t want another family to go through what we have.”

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Connor and his colleague were attempting to move the machine across the workshop, using skates placed underneath.

However, as the machine was being lowered by a jack onto one of the skates, it became unbalanced and fell backwards onto Connor, trapping him beneath. He suffered catastrophic crush injuries and subsequently passed away.

The investigation also found that Partwell Special Steels Limited of Stanley Street, Blackburn, had not undertaken an assessment of the risks involved with moving the machine and that the task had not been suitably planned and no safe system of work had been provided to the employees. Additionally, it was found that neither employee had been provided with suitable and sufficient training to ensure they had the necessary relevant competence to undertake the task. A suitable and sufficient assessment of the suitability of the work equipment provided would have shown that the skates used were unsuitable for this work.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. They were fined £80,000 and was ordered to pay

£6,713 in costs at a hearing at Preston Magistrates Court on 16 December 2024.

HSE Inspector Anthony Banks said: "This company's failures resulted in the death of a much loved young man.

"Those in control of work activities, including the movement of heavy machinery from one part of a site to another, need to assess the risks of that work, and plan a safe way to undertake it.

"This tragic incident could have easily been avoided with the right controls in place.

"My thoughts remain with Connor's family."

The prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Sam Crockett and paralegal officer Gabrielle O'Sullivan.

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5. Guidance for [working safely whilst moving heavy loads](#) is available.