

Manchester company director fined after obstructing HSE investigation

A Manchester-based construction company and its director have been fined after a catalogue of health and safety failings following an inspection.

On 13 January 2022, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors visited a timber-frame housing development under construction off Brookwood Drive in Meir, Stoke-on-Trent by a company called Amro Construction Ltd.

At hearing at North Staffordshire Magistrates Court on 24 August, HSE enforcement lawyer Nathan Cook said that the regulator had identified several health and safety failings, including the presence of an open flame gas stove amongst large volumes of combustible material, a lack of fire precautions, poor site security and inadequate washing facilities.

HSE has guidance about fire safety in construction which can be found at: [Construction – Fire safety industry health & safety \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction-fire-safety/).

Mr Cook went on to say that a HSE investigation found Amro Construction Ltd had also failed to assess the on and off-site fire risks, despite it being a timber-frame project in a highly residential area. This was despite previous advice and enforcement from HSE in relation to the matter. As a result, the company failed to implement measures to prevent a fire from occurring or spreading, putting workers and members of the public at risk. The investigation also found the company had received previous enforcement in relation to the provision of adequate washing facilities.

During the course of the investigation, David Taylor, Amro Construction Ltd managing director, also deliberately obstructed the inspector by refusing to provide information requested as part of his enquiries – causing a delay of several months.

At North Staffordshire Magistrates Court on 24 August, Amro Construction Ltd of The Junction, Rolls Crescent, Hulme, Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 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 £1,587.

David John Taylor of Clarendon Street, Hulme, Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 33(1)(h) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £3,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,935.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Rob Gidman said: “This type of proactive prosecution should highlight to the construction industry that HSE will not hesitate to prosecute companies for repeated breaches of the law, and that directors will also be prosecuted where they intentionally obstruct our inspectors.

“To protect workers and the public, it’s vital that fire risks are adequately considered when planning timber frame construction work so that suitable

control measures can be put in place from the outset.

“This includes considering how to prevent a fire spreading from site during the construction phase, as well as providing general fire precautions such as fire alarms and detection devices.”

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.
4. HSE guidance about [fire safety in construction](#) is available.