

# National Grid fined £3.2million after pylon worker suffers serious burns

The National Grid has been fined more than £3million after its failures left a father-of-two with life-changing injuries from working on a pylon in South Wales.

Justin Hollins was working replacing step bolts on the pylon at Treforest Industrial Estate in Pontypridd, when he received an electric shock of 33 thousand volts. The 50-year-old sustained burns to 40 per cent of his body, including to his arms and legs, and also lost part of his right buttock.

National Grid Electricity Distribution (South Wales) Plc and 4 Power Ltd both received fines in relation to the incident, which happened on 3 December 2020.



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Mr Hollins, who had six operations in the space of his first 10 days in hospital, told of how he required 24 hour care for months afterwards.

“This was a very difficult time, with relentless operations and endless, painful changing of dressings.

“Every day was a huge battle.

“I stopped needing to attend hospital appointments in August 2022 but will remain a burns patient for the rest of my life.

“At the time of my accident I was in peak physical condition, which I was told by the hospital is probably the reason I survived.

“I have been stripped of the opportunity to provide for me family doing the

job I loved.

“Although I appreciate that I have been lucky to survive, I have to live with the physical and mental effects of the accident for life. I also have to live with the uncertainty of the long term damage 33 thousands volts have done to my internal organs.”

Cardiff Crown Court heard that Mr Hollins, also suffered nerve damage that affects mobility, was wearing a climbing harness and left hanging on the pylon for some time before being rescued by his colleagues.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that 4 Power Ltd who are based at Unit 1b, Iddenshall Hall Farm in Cheshire, failed to properly plan and assess the risk. Had this been done, it would have identified that the arms of pylon were too short to do the work safely, while maintaining the specified safety distances as per industry standard. National Grid Electricity Distribution (South Wales) Plc who are based at Avonbank, Feeder Road, Bristol failed to ensure that the electricity was off in order to do this work safely on the pylon.

4 Power Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and have been fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £14,123.

National Grid Electricity Distribution (South Wales) Plc pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 14 of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and have been fined £3.2million and ordered to pay costs of £20,460.

Speaking after the hearing HSE Inspector Rhys Hughes said: “The injuries sustained by Mr Hollins have been truly life-changing. He is lucky to be alive.

“Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information and instruction to workers.

“What is so frustrating in incidents like these is if a safe system of work had been in place before the incident, his injuries would have been prevented.

“HSE provides advice and guidance to employers and workers unsure of what their duties are or how to comply for free on [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk).”

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Iain Jordan and supported by HSE paralegal officer Sarah Thomas.

#### **Notes to editors:**

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](https://www.hse.gov.uk) (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.
4. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).
5. Guidance on the [safe use of work equipment](#) is available.