

# Road tanker manufacturing company fined after gas asphyxiation

A leading tanker manufacturing company has been fined £200,000 after a worker collapsed from gas exposure before the same fate befell a colleague who went to check on him.

On 18 March 2020, a worker at Tasca Tankers in Wakefield, West Yorkshire entered a metal tank to carry out some welding work. A few minutes later, a second worker looked inside the tank to check on his colleague and found him slumped at the bottom. After shouting for help the second worker went into the tank and also collapsed. Emergency services rescued both employees after entering the space with breathing apparatus.



The type of tank the worker entered to carry out some welding work

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to ensure safety of their employees while working in the tanks, classified as a confined space. When inside the tank, the employees suffered asphyxiation resulting from inhalation of argon gas leaking from the welding torch. This resulted in a hypoxic brain injury that left the first worker in a coma for more than 12 days and on waking suffered a loss of memory, the inability to walk, talk and move his left arm. The worker has had to learn to walk and talk again. Both workers continue to suffer long lasting physical and psychological effects of this incident.

HSE has guidance on [working in confined spaces](#).

At Leeds Magistrates' Court on 1 December, Tasca Tankers of Unit 5, Diamond Business Park, Thornes Moor Rd, Wakefield, West Yorkshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay £ £7,060 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Louise Redgrove, said: "Two employees very nearly died in an incident which was foreseeable.

“The company had previously received related enforcement action and yet still failed to identify work was taking place inside confined spaces. This incident could so easily have been avoided if the company had ensured robust controls, effective training and emergency procedures were in place and current.”

This prosecution was led by HSE enforcement lawyer Jonathan Bambro.

**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.