

September 2023 – A roundup of HSE’s top stories this month

A campaign launch, an important investigation update, cautions for fraudulent divers, as well as a host of successful prosecutions were among the top stories published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) during September.

Waste management company fined £3m following HSE investigations

At the beginning of the month, Valencia Waste Management Limited, formerly known as Viridor Waste Management Limited, were fined a total of £3million after two men died in separate incidents.

HSE investigated the firm after the deaths of Michael Atkin and Mark Wheatley in 2019 and 2020.

Michael, a 63-year-old HGV driver from Wetherby, was killed while collecting wastepaper bales at the firm’s Grendon Road site in Earls Barton, Northamptonshire on 10 October 2019.



Mark Wheatley (right) and his partner Keeley Martin

Just months later, 31-year-old agency worker Mark, died while lifting two skips with a lorry at a depot in Bovey Tracey in Devon on 17 January 2020.

[The devastated families of both men paid tributes to the impact of losing their loved ones](#)

Divers and company director receive police cautions for fraud

Two offshore commercial divers and the director of a diving company were sanctioned for exaggerating credentials.

HSE investigators slammed the trio for false claims of diving experience that

could have jeopardised their own and other divers' lives in an offshore incident.

Following the investigation, two divers from the Portsmouth area had their diving qualifications withdrawn.

[Both men and the director of a commercial diving company also received police cautions for fraud.](#)

Gas Safety Week: Engineer of the Year discusses career, regulations and diversity

An award-winning gas specialist at HSE described the “emotionally taxing” week he spent at the site of an explosion that claimed the life of a two-year-old boy.



Steve (middle) collecting his award at the National Gas Industry Awards

Steve Critchlow, a principal registered gas engineer, was called to Mallowdale Avenue in Heysham, Lancashire, following the blast in May 2021.

He stayed at the site for a week as part of his investigation for HSE.

[His report helped support the conviction of a man who received 15 years in jail for manslaughter.](#)

HSE to lead investigation into double fatality at Teesworks site

On 15 September, we announced that an investigation into the deaths of two men at the Teesworks site in 2019, will be led by HSE.

John Mackay and Tom Williams died following an explosion at the site.

[This remains a criminal investigation that Cleveland Police will continue to support.](#)

Grimsby company fined £200,000 after driver suffers chemical burns

A company in Lincolnshire was fined £200,000 after a driver suffered chemical burns to his feet assuming he was standing in a puddle of rainwater.

The man had been offloading his tanker with a delivery at the Laporte Road

site of Tronox Pigment UK Limited, in Stallingborough, Grimsby, on 9 August 2022.

[The driver was actually standing in a pool of water containing caustic, a corrosive chemical substance.](#)

Time running out as deadline to register high-rise buildings nears

On 20 September, a warning was given that time was running out to register high-rise buildings with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR).

It will be a criminal offence for any qualifying building not to be registered with the new regulator after 1 October 2023. Registration opened in April 2023.

[Those responsible for high-rise buildings not registered by the deadline could face significant sanctions, including prosecution.](#)

HSE campaign highlights dangers from metalworking fluids

Businesses are being warned to make sure their staff are safe when working with metalworking fluids or coolants.



HSE inspector Stacey Gamwell with Dane Rawson, director of CNTL Ltd

Exposure to metalworking fluids – also referred to as ‘white water’ – can cause harm to lungs and skin through inhalation or direct contact with unprotected skin; particularly the hands, forearms and face.

[HSE plans to carry out unannounced inspections between now and March 2024.](#)

Company fined £1.275m after man crushed to death

A Birmingham company was fined £1,275,000 after a 26-year-old man was crushed to death during maintenance work at Mountsorrel Quarry in Leicestershire.

Tarmac Aggregates Limited failed to ensure critical defects were recorded and rectified in a timely manner.



Luke and his girlfriend Sarah

Luke Branston, from Leicester, died in the early hours of 21 June 2017 after becoming trapped between a conveyor and a feed hopper.

[His family say they are devastated by his passing.](#)