

Serious failings found at hand car wash firms across South East

Serious health and safety breaches were found by inspectors at 20 hand car wash businesses in West Sussex and Kent.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspected hand car washes around the counties as part of an inspection campaign. In Mid Sussex and Crawley, they found failings at each site they visited and failings were found at half the sites visited in Kent.



- Electrical faults such as damaged cabling is a common issue

Faulty sockets, damaged cabling, and defective equipment were just some of the common issues HSE inspectors found.

HSE says businesses are failing to protect their staff and customers as a new wave of inspections begins this week (w/c 19 June 2023).

The two-day inspection campaign ran in May and was in response to persistent safety problems with hand car wash businesses across the country. It follows the recent prosecution by HSE of a [car valeting company in the North East of England](#). The inspection campaign will now move on to East Sussex and Surrey.

The majority of issues identified related to [electrical safety](#) such as faulty sockets, damaged cabling, and defective electrical equipment. Inspectors also found some businesses didn't have [Employers Liability \(Compulsory\) Insurance](#) in place while others lacked [basic toilet and other staff welfare facilities](#).



- Serious failings such as faulty sockets were found at hand car wash businesses across the South East

Principal Inspector Emma Stiles, who is leading the campaign, said that the results reinforced HSE's concerns about basic safety in the industry.

"Hand car washes have been identified as an area of concern for some time," she said.

"The fact basic safety issues for were found at the majority of the premises we have visited so far have borne this out.

"A number of Prohibition Notices have been served meaning that there was an immediate serious risk of injury to staff and members of the public.

"Faulty electrical sockets and wiring are putting workers and the public at risk of serious injury from contact with electricity.

"Business owners need to understand the implications of cutting corners around safety."

The HSE campaign will now target other areas, including East Sussex (from Lewes to Bexhill-on-Sea) and Surrey (Elmbridge and Runneymede). These inspections will be carried out from June 19.

HSE is asking the public to be vigilant when using car washes and to report any issues to the regulator.

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 on [electrical safety and maintenance](#), [employers' liability insurance](#) and the [provision of welfare facilities](#) is available.