

# Kingstanding house gas explosion: Stay safe with a gas safety check

Getting a gas safety check is the best way to protect your property.

That's the message to people in Kingstanding who might be concerned after a gas explosion destroyed a house in the Birmingham neighbourhood last month. A woman died and a man was seriously injured in the incident.

Gas incidents such as the Kingstanding explosion are devastating but extremely rare. HSE's statistics show there were 25 gas related fire and explosion incidents in 2020/2021. This is despite there being over 22 million households using gas across the country.

The authorities recommend some simple steps people can take to keep their homes safe.

Gas appliances should be regularly checked to prevent gas leaks and stop carbon monoxide being released. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) says homeowners should get an annual gas safety check carried out by a qualified engineer listed on the Gas Safe Register.

Anyone living in rented accommodation should check their landlord has had an annual gas safety record check carried out by a registered Gas Safe engineer.

The Gas Safe Register is the official list of gas businesses which are registered to work safely and legally on boilers, cookers, fires, and all other gas appliances. By law, anyone working with gas in domestic or commercial premises must be listed on the register. Gas Safe registered businesses can be found on their [website](#).

Meanwhile, everyone should find where in their property the gas emergency control valve (also called gas emergency shut off valve) is. This will be found at their gas meter. Householders should check they have access to it. If they ever smell gas, call the gas emergency number on 0800 111 999.

In some circumstances, suppliers can offer free gas safety checks through the Priority Services Register. For further advice and information homeowners can contact their gas supplier (the company they pay their bills to).

John Rowe, HSE policy lead for gas safety, said: "Our thoughts are with those affected by the terrible Kingstanding incident. When something so devastating happens, people understandably worry.

"The truth is gas is an incredibly safe way of fuelling our homes. Serious incidents are extremely rare. We should all be careful and not unduly concerned about using gas in our home. We're encouraging householders to get a gas safety check, carried out by a registered Gas Safe engineer. Everyone should know where their emergency gas safety valve is and that it is

accessible. These steps will help keep people safe.”

Bob Kerr, Gas Services Director at Gas Safe Register, said: “Regular safety checking and servicing of gas appliances can ensure that they are operating safely and as intended. Having an audible carbon monoxide alarm is also a good second line of defence.”

Alex Shapland, Area Commander with West Midlands Fire Service, said: “Our thoughts remain with everyone affected by the devastating incident in Kingstanding; in particular those who grieve and the man who was injured.

“The events of 26 June are a stark reminder of how important it is to get gas appliances regularly tested by a Gas Safe professional.

“We would also urge anyone who’s concerned about fire safety at home to contact their local fire and rescue service. Our own ‘Safe and Well’ visits can be requested via our website, [wmfs.net](http://wmfs.net), and by calling 0800 389 5525.”

### **Further information:**

For more information on gas health and safety visit HSE’s [website](#).

You can find out more at [Check Your Gas Appliances – Gas Safe Register](#)

Tips to keep gas safe:

1. Only use a Gas Safe registered engineer to fit, fix and service your appliances. You can find and check an engineer at [GasSafeRegister.co.uk](http://GasSafeRegister.co.uk) or call 0800 408 5500.
1. Know the six signs of carbon monoxide poisoning – headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse and loss of consciousness.
1. Check gas appliances for warning signs that they are not working properly - for example lazy yellow flames instead of crisp blue ones, black marks or stains on or around the appliance and condensation in the room.
1. Fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm. This will alert you if there is carbon monoxide in your home.
1. If you smell gas call the gas emergency number on 0800 111 999.
1. Check both sides of your engineer’s Gas Safe Register ID card. Make sure they are qualified for the work you need doing. You can find this information on the back of the card.
1. Have all your gas appliances regularly serviced and safety checked every year. If you rent your home, ask for a copy of the landlord’s current Gas Safety Record.

### **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. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

1. HSE news releases are available at: <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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## [HSE investigating fatal incident in Scunthorpe](#)

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is investigating the death of a 27-year-old worker at a steelworks in Scunthorpe.

The incident happened on Saturday 16 July at a business premises on Brigg Road, Scunthorpe.

Emergency services responded to reports of a fall from height. The worker was sadly pronounced dead at the scene.

After initial enquiries were made by HSE and Humberside Police, it was established that HSE will lead the investigation into the circumstances of the incident.

HSE principal inspector Jane Fox said: "Our thoughts are with the family of the person who died.

"We are determined to understand the full facts of what happened on Saturday. Doing so may take time, but we will remain in close contact with the family."

### **About HSE**

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# Fatal injuries in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing in Great Britain report published

The number of people killed in agriculture-related activities in the last 12 months has fallen from its high level in 2021, but the rate of fatal injuries in the sector remains the highest of all major industries.

Provisional figures for 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 show 25 people were killed in agriculture-related activities, 22 workers and three members of the public.

The total of 25 is 16 fewer than the previous year and seven fewer than the five-year average. The oldest farmer killed in the most recent year was 85, the youngest person killed was a nine-year-old child.

Although, the number of fatal injuries to workers in the agricultural sector has fallen by around half since the early 1980s, the rate of fatalities, which is based on the number of people at work in the sector, has remained high. The worker fatal injury rate is 21 times higher than the average five-year annual rate across all industries.

The most common causes of death in agriculture have not changed for many years. This year is no different. The 5 most common causes of work-related death in agriculture are:

- Being struck by a moving vehicle
- Being struck by an object, such as bales
- Coming into contact with machinery, during operation or maintenance
- Falling from height
- Being crushed or trampled by animals, usually cattle.

Older workers, those aged 65 and older, accounted for more than a third of all worker fatalities.

Publication of the report (click [here](#)) coincides with the start of Farm Safety Week, which begins today (Monday 18 July) and runs until Friday.

Sue Thompson, Head of Agriculture, Health & Safety Executive, said: "Farming families are left devastated every year when their loved ones are killed.

"The numbers of fatalities this year is lower than last, and we are starting to see improvements in some areas, but the pace of change is slow, and the rate of workplace fatal injury in agriculture remains the highest of any sector.

"Agriculture is a vital part of our economy, and everyone involved is rightly proud of the quality and standard of the food produced.

“But it is not acceptable that agriculture continues to fail to manage risk in the workplace. We need everyone to play their part to improve the culture and modify the poor behaviours we see far too frequently. I encourage everyone to do things the right way and have the courage to ‘call out’ poor practices whenever they are seen.

“Agriculture will continue to be a priority sector for HSE. We are committed to making workplaces safer and holding employers to account for their actions, as part of our mission to protect people and places.

“Awareness of the hazards and risk have never been higher, and Farm Safety Week has played its part in this.

“But it’s regrettable that we’re not yet seeing the widespread changes in attitude towards safety, and the improvements in behaviour that will reduce the numbers of people injured or killed.

“Everyone in agriculture has a role to play in making the changes we all want to see. Together, we can make farming safer.”

The full report and more information on working safely in agriculture is available on the HSE website.

Farm Safety Week, which shines a light on safety in the sector, is led by the Farm Safety Foundation.

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2. The report highlights trends and provides summaries of each fatality involving employees, the self-employed and members of the public. The full report along with summaries of the circumstances of the individual fatal injuries can be read at [Fatal injuries in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Great Britain: 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 poster \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
3. Farm Safety Week is an initiative led by the Farm Safety Foundation and supported by the Farm Safety Partnerships, The Health and Safety Executive, Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland and the Health & Safety Authority, Ireland.
4. HSE continues to work with stakeholders across the farming and forestry sector to keep up the pressure to manage risk in the workplace to reduce the likelihood of serious injury, ill health and death.
5. For information on how to stay healthy and safe in agriculture see HSE guidance [What a good farm looks like – Agriculture \(hse.gov.uk\)](#) and [Farmwise: Your essential guide to health and safety in agriculture \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

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## Extreme heat: What are my rights at work?

- **Employers must make sure indoor workplace temperatures are reasonable**
- **No “maximum temperature” for workplaces in Great Britain**
- **Workers must take care to keep cool**
- **HSE shares guidance**

Employers must make sure indoor workplaces remain at a reasonable temperature and manage the risk of working outdoors in hot environments, according to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The workplace regulator is sharing guidance ahead of the extreme warm weather predicted for Great Britain at the start of next week.

A heatwave warning is in place until Tuesday (19 July) so HSE is reminding employers of their legal duty to ensure employees can work in reasonable temperatures in indoor workplaces. What is reasonable varies, and will depend upon the nature of the individual workplace.

There is no maximum temperature for workplaces, but all workers are entitled to an environment where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled. Heat is classed as a hazard and comes with legal obligations like any other hazard.

Workers should also take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work.

John Rowe, HSE’s Acting Head of Operational Strategy, said: “With a heatwave warning in place, it’s vital employers are aware of their responsibility to ensure their indoor workplaces are at a reasonable temperature.

“All workers have a right to a safe working environment and their employers should discuss working arrangements with them.

“If workers have specific queries or concerns relating to health and safety in their workplace, they should talk to their employer.”

There’s no maximum temperature because workplaces with hot processes such as bakeries or foundries would not be able to comply with such a regulation. They use other measures to control the effects of temperature. These other measures should also be used to manage the risk of working outdoors in a hot environment.

### **Further information**

Temperatures in the indoor workplace are covered by the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

In addition, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to make a suitable assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees and take action where necessary and where reasonably practicable.

Further guidance on the practical steps that can be taken to work safely in hot conditions can be found through the attached links:

[Temperature \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk)

[HSE – Thermal comfort:Employee’s guide – temperature](#)

[HSE – Temperature: What the Law says](#)

[HSE – Temperature: Outdoor working](#)

[Are you an employee: Workers’ health and safety \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

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## **Company fined for multiple safety failings**

A company has been fined after multiple health and safety failings were found at a site in Bishop Auckland.

Acting on concerns raised, HSE visited the steel supplies site in 2019, finding wholly inadequate management of health and safety. It also came to light that two workers had been injured on separate occasions whilst operating machinery at the premises. In June 2019, an employee was struck and injured by a work piece and suffered an injury to his right hand. In July 2019, an agency worker suffered a finger amputation whilst manually removing a piece of metal near the unguarded blade of another machine.

An investigation by HSE found the company had failed to prevent access to the dangerous moving parts on both machines. These machines were metal rebar forming machines and had been used at the site for a number of years. In addition to the guarding faults, HSE also found the emergency stop and safety devices wired out on one of the machines.

Furthermore, the machinery risk assessments were substandard and staff were trained to operate the machines in an unsafe manner. The company also had a forklift truck in daily use, despite it having defective brakes.

Midland Steel Reinforcement Supplies (UK) Limited, of Flemington Industrial Estate, Motherwell pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Regulations 5(1) and 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and Regulation 9(3) of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998.

At Durham Crown Court the company was fined £450,000 and ordered to pay £41,23.51 costs.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector Clare Maltby said: “ Companies have a duty of care to those they employ and HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action.

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)