



Wilkins Safety Group

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Welcome to our latest Update E-Newsletter

As ever, please feel free to share this with friends and colleagues. You will also find PDF versions of all our other newsletters on our website: www.wilkinssafety.co.uk with lots more useful information and a wealth of leaflets covering Health and Safety topics.



How much do health and safety failures really cost you?

Last week we looked at the Accident and Ill health figures released by the HSE so this week we thought we should concentrate on what these failures cost you, the employer.

We are not just thinking about the financial cost either. Accidents or Ill health can affect the morale of the workforce as well as the reputation of the company. Not to forget, of course, the pain and suffering of the injured party.

This week's 2 recent HSE cases look at accidents that cost all involved dearly.

- A care home has been fined **£100,000** after an 85-year-old resident died after becoming trapped between a wardrobe and a radiator.
- **Brian Morris, 59, from Llanbadarn Fynnyd** had his right arm severed while clearing sawdust from underneath a circular saw.

As ever, if you have a subject that you would like us to cover one week, please contact us by phone [01458 253682](tel:01458253682)
Email info@wilkinssafety.co.uk or via our [Facebook page](#) or by [Twitter](#)

How much do health and safety failures really cost you?

Last year, the HSE & Local Authorities enforced 13,790 notices in England and Wales. The average penalty charged? **£26,706**.

And the total cost of injuries and ill health across the UK – an estimated **£14.2 billion**. Which includes fines issued by courts totalling **£18 million**

Now I don't know of many companies that could easily swallow fines or losses like that without it having serious consequences to their company.

But health and safety failure has more than just a financial price.

For instance, just how much time do we lose across the UK due to workplace illness and injury?

Last year's grand total? A whopping **28.2 million days**. Of course the larger companies can probably cope with the odd person or two off for a while as a result of an injury. But can you, running a smaller business? Especially if that injured or ill person is a critical member of your workforce and you are at a very busy time. The last thing you need is for that person to be off because he/she had an accident at work that could and should have been avoided.

Over 23,500 deaths each year from workplace illness

And the cost of failure can be even more serious. There are over **13,000 deaths** each year are due to **lung diseases** – as the result of long term workplace exposure to chemicals or dust.

There are also over **8,000 deaths** attributed to **occupational cancers** each year.

And the legacy of **asbestos exposure** continues to haunt people – with **2,535 deaths** attributed to mesothelioma in **2012**.



Gravely ill ... asbestos campaigner Bernie Banton

Sadly illness takes longer to show than say, a cut from a blade or a broken bone from a fall. Consequently people don't always treat them with the amount of caution that they deserve. How many times have you heard people say *"It's alright, I'm only going to be a minute or so"* when of course even a short exposure to things like asbestos fibre or some dusts can cause serious illness years further on. For example; some mesotheliomas caused by asbestos exposure, can lay undiagnosed for 20 plus years. Sadly once diagnosed and causing severe health problems, there is no known cure.

Accidents and injuries in the workplace are one of those things we never expect to happen. We hope they never do.

But one mistake is all it takes to tar a perfectly good track record. We all know that the accident at work makes good headlines which can damage your otherwise, good reputation. So that mistake can turn out to be pretty costly – consequently, taking the right steps early on can make a big difference for your business.

Time taken off work:

Every week, over a million people need to take time off work. But according to the HSE, **one in five** of these will end up staying sick in the long term.

Losing days off work doesn't just have a financial impact on a business. As well as losing valuable time, it can really affect the self-esteem and well-being of individuals, making it harder for them to return to work.

To prevent this, here's what you can do:

- carry out proper risk assessments to identify factors that can affect health
- make sure everyone understands the practical health and safety measures you put in place
- work with people to make any adjustments that might be needed, to deal with any health difficulties
- you might need to make changes to the premises, working arrangements or the role being carrying out

Workplace fatalities:

Workplace fatalities don't just include the occasional headline-making tragedies from unfortunate accidents.

Sadly, they're much more common – most deaths result from long-term illnesses and diseases, from exposure to harmful substances, stress and fatigue.

But the good news is that simple steps can help to cut down the risk of fatalities in the first place.

- shift work has a growing link to breast cancer development, because of long-term fatigue and sleep disturbance. So while shift work may be necessary, you can still work with employees to design a schedule with a healthier pattern, and is less likely to cause fatigue
- Carry out regular checks to measure emission levels around the workplace and provide adequate protective equipment

None of us want to be one of those shocking health and safety statistics. But by taking care of your health and paying attention to everyday factors, you could save yourself a bundle by preventing more serious problems from ever coming up.

Benefits of good health and safety

Addressing health and safety should not be seen as a regulatory burden: it offers significant opportunities. Benefits can include:

- reduced costs;
- reduced risks;
- lower employee absence and turnover rates;

- fewer accidents;
- lessened threat of legal action;
- improved standing among suppliers and partners;
- better reputation for corporate responsibility among investors, customers and communities;
- increased productivity, because employees are healthier, happier and better motivated.

Case study - British Sugar

British Sugar had an excellent safety record and was devastated in 2003 when it suffered three fatalities. Although health and safety had always been a business priority, the company recognised that a change in focus was needed to achieve behavioural change. This included:



- the CEO assigning health and safety responsibilities to all directors, and monthly reports go to the board;
- creating effective working partnerships with employees, trade unions and others;
- overseeing a behavioural change programme and audits;
- Publishing annual health and safety targets, and devising initiatives to meet them.

Results include:

- A two thirds reduction in both lost time and minor injury frequency rates over a 10 year period.
- Much greater understanding by directors of health and safety risks.

So please, think about your business and see what you could do to improve safety and health there and prevent any incidents to your workforce.

If you would like any further help or support, please please contact us by phone [01458 253682](tel:01458253682)
 Email info@wilkinssafety.co.uk or via our [Facebook page](#) or by [Twitter](#)

Now to the latest HSE cases:

Care home owner in court over death of vulnerable resident

The owner of a Leicester care home has been fined £100,000 after a vulnerable 85-year-old resident died from serious burns.

Walter Powley was admitted to Western Park View in Hinckley Road for emergency care in May 2012 after an occupational therapist advised his family he could no longer be safely left alone at home due to his risk of falling.

Leicester Crown Court today (23 Jan) heard that four days later, on 8 May, Mr Powley fell in his room and became trapped between a wardrobe and a radiator. He suffered serious burns right through the skin of his right leg from the radiator pipe and valves, and superficial burns to both legs probably from hot water leaking from the valve. He died in hospital from his injuries eight days later.



A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found the pipes and valves at the home, owned by Western Park Leicester Ltd, were not covered and to touch had temperatures of around 73 degrees centigrade.

It also found Western Park Leicester Ltd was aware that Mr Powley was at risk of falls and injury and that staff should be vigilant, but the company failed to assess the risks in his room and take appropriate action to control and manage them.

Western Park Leicester Ltd, of Queen Street, Wolverhampton, pleaded guilty to breaching section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay a further £35,000 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Dr Richenda Dixon said:

“This was a foreseeable and preventable fatal incident. While most of the residents at Western Park View are physically disabled with limited mobility, Walter was not. He was more mobile, and known to be so, hence at greater danger from any risks in his room.

“The scalding or burning risks from the pipes were longstanding and could have caused injury to any resident. Western Park Leicester failed to heed published guidance from HSE about the need to cover hot pipes and valves. Had they been covered or boxed-in Walter’s death could have been prevented.”

In a statement on behalf of Mr Powley’s family, his son, Colin, said:

“We are still devastated not only by our Dad’s death but also how it came about. His stay at Western Park View was only to be for two weeks’ respite while we explored all options for future care.

“We had supported and cared for Dad daily and kept him safe in his own home for six years following a stroke. The fact that he died from injuries sustained as a result of, in our view, inadequate care in a place where he was supposedly safer than at home, is heart-breaking.

“We all have to live with the thought that Dad trusted our decision to place him in temporary respite care and that decision ultimately cost him his life. We have lost valuable time with our dearly-loved Dad and his young grandchildren have lost the time to build on their relationship and memories of him. Nearly three years on we are still grieving for our loss and for the huge hole left in all our lives.

“We hope that the lessons learned with regard to exposed pipe work and acceptable temperatures for hot surfaces in care homes will prevent other families having to experience what we have.”

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Firm in court after worker loses arm

A Powys firm has been fined for serious safety failings after a woodworker had his right arm severed while clearing sawdust from underneath a circular saw.



Brian Morris, 59, from Llanbadarn Fynnyd, was working at Stagecraft Display Ltd’s factory just outside Llandrindod Wells when the incident happened on 23 February 2012.

Llandrindod Wells Magistrates’ Court was told today (21 January) that at the time of the incident Mr Morris had finished sawing for the day and his last task after an 11-hour shift was to clean the saw and saw well.

He stopped the machine and opened the door of the well while the blade was still running down and was on one knee blowing air into the well to clear the dust. At the same time a forklift truck drove into the factory and he turned his head to look.

As he did so the moving blade caught the sleeve of his work jacket and cut his right arm. Although he managed to pull himself free, the arm was almost wholly severed.

Mr Morris was taken to hospital, where he remained for a month, but doctors were unable to successfully reattach his arm and he underwent an amputation below the elbow.

He was unable to return to work because of his injuries and has since died from an unrelated illness.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that although the machine was fitted with an interlock that stops power to the saw when the door to the saw well is opened, the saw took more than 30 seconds to stop completely.

The court was also told that a self-employed machine maintenance engineer inspected the saw three months before the incident and told one of the company’s managers that it should be taken out of service or fitted with a brake which would stop the blade much sooner.

Stagecraft Display Ltd, of Esgair Draenllwyn, Llaithddu, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £11,865 in costs after pleading guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Damian Corbett said:

“This incident was entirely preventable. Saws cause the most injuries in the woodworking industry and power-operated circular saws are dangerous machines which have caused many serious incidents.

“Employees should not be able to gain access to dangerous parts of the machinery while they are moving and Stagecraft Display had a duty, as do all employers, to ensure that this cannot happen.

“Unfortunately in this case the saw had not finished rotating despite the fact that Mr Morris had switched it off and he then inadvertently came into contact with the moving blade, suffering a horrific injury.”

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Remember

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- Our newsletter service is FREE,
- the links we supply are FREE,
- the helpline advice is FREE.

If you find this newsletter service of use and you think others might also find it useful, then kindly pass it on and ask them to subscribe for free, so they can continue to receive it in their own right.

Also contact us if you have a particular health and safety subject or question you would like covered



If you have any queries on any health and safety matter, please contact Jon Wilkins on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or by email on jon@wilkinssafety.co.uk



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