



# Wilkins Safety Group

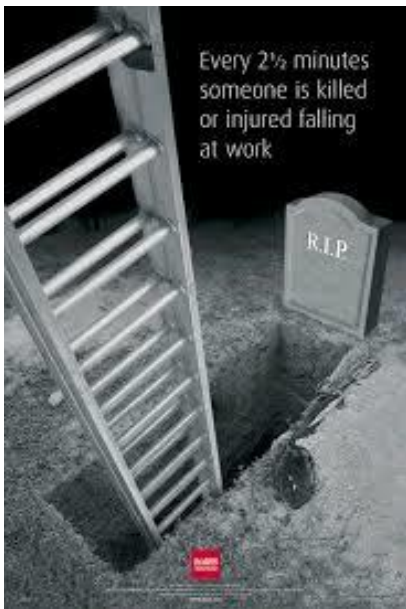
Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014

## Inside this Issue

1. Preventing slips and trips
2. Firms fined for child's death in electric sliding gate
3. Company back in court for safety Failings

## 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](http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk) with lots more useful information and a wealth of leaflets covering Health and Safety topics.



**This week we are looking at Preventing slips and trips at work.**

Slips and trips are the most common cause of injury at work. On average, they cause 40 per cent of all reported major injuries and can also lead to other types of serious accidents, for example falls from height.

Slips and trips are also the most reported injury to members of the public.

**We also have 2 recent HSE cases for you to look at and consider:**

- **5 Year old Karolina Golabek was killed** when she became trapped between the closing edge of the gate and the gate post outside flats near her home in Bridgend on 3 July 2010.
- **Radford HMY Group Ltd** has appeared in court for safety breaches for the second time in less than a year after a forklift truck overturned at its factory in Burnopfield.

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## ***Preventing slips and trips at work!***

Slips and trips are the most common cause of injury at work. On average, they cause 40 per cent of all reported major injuries and can also lead to other types of serious accidents, for example falls from height.

This article describes measures that employers may need to implement to help prevent slips and trips. It will also be useful to employees and their safety representatives. The solutions are often simple and low-cost.

## ***What does the law say?***

**The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act)** requires employers to ensure the health and safety of all employees and anyone who may be affected by their work, so far as is reasonably practicable. This includes taking steps to control slip and trip risks.

Employees have a duty not to put themselves or others in danger, and must use any safety equipment provided.

**The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** require employers to assess risks (including slip and trip risks) and, where necessary, take action to address them.

**The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992** require floors to be suitable, in good condition and free from obstructions. People should be able to move around safely.

## ***What can employers do to prevent slips and trips??***

### **Risk assessment**

You must manage the health and safety risks in your workplace. To do this you need to decide whether you are doing enough to prevent harm. This process is known as a risk assessment and it is something you are required by law to carry out.

A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about taking sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace, for example using doormats to stop rainwater being tracked in and making the floor slippery.

You are probably already taking steps to protect your employees, but your risk assessment will tell you whether you should be doing more. Consider what risks in your workplace may lead to slip or trip injuries, and decide what suitable and effective control measures will prevent these types of accidents.

You then need to put these control measures into practice. Concentrate on the real risks – those that are most likely to cause harm. Think about how accidents could happen and who might be harmed. You can do this by:

- asking your employees what they think the hazards are, as they may notice things that are not obvious to you and may have some good ideas on how to control the risks;
- using a hazard-spotting checklist for slips and trips to help you identify problem areas;
- referring to the '**Practical steps to prevent slips and trips accidents**' section below.

In many instances, straightforward measures can readily control risks, for example ensuring spillages are cleaned up promptly so people do not slip.

Make a record of your significant findings and what you have in place to prevent them. If you have fewer than five employees you don't have to write anything down but we at [Wilkins Safety Group](#) recommend you keep written records anyway.

Few workplaces stay the same, so it makes sense to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis.

## ***Practical steps to prevent slips and trips accidents***

There are many simple ways to control slips and trips risks and prevent accidents in your workplace. Here are a few examples.

### ***Stop floors becoming contaminated***

- Use entrance matting.
- Fix leaks from machinery or buildings.
- Make sure plant and equipment are maintained.
- Design tasks to minimise spillages.
- Plan pedestrian and vehicle routes to avoid contaminated areas.



### ***Use the right cleaning methods***

- Make sure that your cleaning method is effective for the type of floor you have.
- Don't introduce more slip or trip risks while cleaning is being done.
- Leave smooth floors dry after cleaning or exclude pedestrians until the floor is dry.
- Remove spillages promptly.
- Have effective arrangements for both routine cleaning and dealing with spills.
- Use the appropriate detergent mixed at the correct concentration.

### ***Consider the flooring and work environment***

- Check for loose, damaged and worn flooring and replace as needed.
- Floors likely to get wet or have spillages on them should be of a type that does not become unduly slippery.
- Make sure lighting is sufficient and that slopes or steps are clearly visible.
- Keep walkways and work areas clear of obstructions.

### ***Get the right footwear***

- Where floors cannot be kept clean and dry, slip-resistant footwear can help prevent slip accidents.
- Trial footwear first to make sure it is suitable for the environment and for those who will be wearing it, i.e. comfort and fit.
- If footwear is supplied as personal protective equipment (PPE), it must be supplied free of charge to employees.

## ***Think about people and organisational factors***

- Consider how work is organised and managed, eg to avoid rushing, overcrowding, trailing cables.
- Make sure employees are involved in the decisions that affect them, e.g. choice of PPE footwear or a change in cleaning methods.

## ***What can employees do to prevent slips and trips?***

In all workplaces:

- If you have an accident or a near miss, make sure you report it to your employer promptly. They can use this information to prevent future accidents.
- If you see a spillage, clean it up or make arrangements for it to be cleaned.
- Report any damaged floors or mats.
- Play your part and keep the workplace tidy.
- If you see items on the floor where someone could trip over them, remove them or arrange for them to be removed or for the situation to be made safe.
- If you are given PPE, wear it and look after it. Report any faults or damage to your employer and make arrangements for a replacement.
- Tell your employer about any work situation that you think is dangerous, or if you notice that something has gone wrong with their health and safety arrangements.

More information about preventing slips and trips at work can be found at:

[http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/pdf/whss/slips\\_and\\_trips.pdf](http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/pdf/whss/slips_and_trips.pdf)

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## ***Firms fined for child's death in electric sliding gate***

**A Swansea installation firm and a Cardiff maintenance company have been sentenced for serious safety failings after a five-year-old girl was crushed to death by an electric gate.**

Karolina Golabek was killed when she became trapped between the closing edge of the gate and the gate post outside flats near her home in Bridgend on 3 July 2010.

The incident was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which prosecuted John Glen (Installation Services) Ltd and Tremorfa Ltd after finding the gate was inherently unsafe and posed a clear risk.



Tragedy: Karolina Golabek, from Bridgend, South Wales

Cardiff Crown Court heard today (Thursday 12 June) that Karolina was playing around the gates in Brook Court when they automatically closed after a car passed through. Her body was found in the gap between the post and gate a short time later by a resident. She was rushed to hospital, but died as a result of her injuries.

HSE found that the closing force of the gate did not meet European and British safety standards. It was in excess of 2,000N, the equivalent to the force created by a weight of 440lbs (220kgs).

There were also dangers with the gate structure, which left space for people to get trapped, and there were insufficient safety devices to detect a person in the area that would automatically prevent it closing. These safety features were incorrectly set.

The court was told that John Glen (Installation Services) Ltd had fitted a new electric motor to the gate when a previous motor had broken. The gate was put back into use despite the fact that there were obvious trapping points. The firm also failed to properly test that the gate stopped when it met an obstruction, or test the force that the gate closed with.

Tremorfa Limited was contracted to maintain the gate. Despite carrying out two maintenance visits, the last one just six weeks before Karolina's death, the company did not carry out vital safety checks, including closing force measurements.

John Glen (Installation Services) Ltd of Phoenix Way, Garngoch Industrial Estate, Swansea, was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay £40,000 in costs after pleading guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Tremorfa Ltd, of Pascal Close, St Mellons, Cardiff, was fined £50,000 with costs of £40,000 also pleaded guilty to the same charge.

HSE Inspector Stuart Charles, speaking after the hearing, said:

*“Karolina’s death has left her family devastated, and yet it could so easily have been avoided.*

*“Both companies walked away from the gate leaving it in an unsafe condition. Both could have prevented this tragedy.*

*“Automated gates are becoming more common and it’s sometimes difficult to appreciate that even small gates can close with significant force. Badly installed and maintained gates are a threat to all pedestrians, but young children are particularly vulnerable because they are often completely unaware of the dangers.*

*“No-one should install or work on automated gates without knowing the relevant safety standards or without having the right equipment to check that the gate is safe after they have worked on it .*

*“If you own or are responsible for managing properties with automatic gates you should ensure they are properly maintained. You should also ensure that those carrying out the maintenance are competent to do so.”*

Further information about electric gates can be found on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/press/2010/hse-electricgates.htm>

## ***Company back in court for safety failings***

**A Tyneside company has appeared in court for safety breaches for the second time in less than a year after a forklift truck overturned at its factory in Burnopfield.**

The driver, a 51-year-old agency worker employed by Radford HMY Group Ltd, was fortunately not injured in the incident on 27 June 2012 and returned to work to finish his shift.

However, Peterlee Magistrates' Court heard today (9 June) the incident was reported as a dangerous occurrence and investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which prosecuted the company.



HSE found the forklift truck had been driven, during a night shift, on a totally unsuitable outside path. The path was only 40cm wider than the truck, and was raised above the adjacent ground in places along its length of some 150 metres.

The driver was not assessed or authorised to operate the truck and had not been made familiar with the controls. It was also found that the agency worker had been taken on as a cleaner with no requirement for him to operate a forklift truck.

Radford HMY Group Ltd was served with an Improvement Notice to make modifications to the path to make it safer to use. As a result, a number of improvements were made, including widening the path to 2.2 metres, levelling it off, clearer marking of pedestrian routes and improved warning signs. The path was also designated one-way and restricted to day shift only.

The court was also told that magistrates had fined the company £2,000 in October last year after it admitted breaching Section 2(1) of Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 following an incident in February 2012, when a worker's hand was badly crushed in a machine on which a safety guard had been deliberately disabled.

Radford HMY Group Ltd, Hobson Industrial Estate, Burnopfield, Newcastle, was fined a total of £5,000 (£2,500 for each offence) and ordered to pay £3,824.45 costs after pleading guilty to two offences of breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

After the case, HSE Inspector Cain Mitchell said:

*"This incident was entirely preventable and it is extremely fortunate that the driver was not seriously injured. "Radford HMY Group Ltd had failed to adequately assess the risks to employees using this path and the operator in this instance had received no training at all in the use of a forklift truck. "The case is all the more serious as it is the second time in less than a year that Radford HMY Group Ltd has been prosecuted for safety failings.*

*“Every year, there are numerous incidents involving transport in the workplace, many of which result in people being injured or even killed. People can fall from vehicles, and can be knocked down, run over, or crushed against fixed parts, plant and trailers.”*

For more information and guidance on forklift truck safety log onto the Wilkins Safety Group website at:  
[http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/pdf/whss/fork\\_lift\\_trucks.pdf](http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/pdf/whss/fork_lift_trucks.pdf)

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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](mailto:jon@wilkinssafety.co.uk)



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