AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2026 THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF HIRE ASSOCIATION EUROPE AND EVENT HIRE ASSOCIATION

INTERFACE ON HIRE

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INTRODUCTION BY HAE EHA CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER PAUL GAZE

A view from on hire

SECTOR skills have been a real focus point for me over the past few weeks. Having great equipment and offering a high level of service to customers are important elements for achieving success. However, making the commitment to invest in new talent and developing your existing workforce is critical to long term sustained growth.

On behalf of Hire Association Europe (HAE) and Event Hire Association (EHA) I was delighted to attend the recent Sunbelt Rentals UK & Ireland Apprentice Awards 2026 at the Heart of England Conference and Events Centre in Coventry.

I also had the opportunity to attend two excellent masterclasses prior to the Awards Ceremony. The first was on Supporting Wellbeing with PEAK4 and this was followed up with a session delivered by the RS Group.

The apprentices who graduated encompassed a wide range of disciplines and stages of their working life from early careers at Level 2, all the way through to Level 7 via upskilling the existing workforce. As a former apprentice myself, I am in a privileged position being able to attend and support apprenticeship events across our membership.

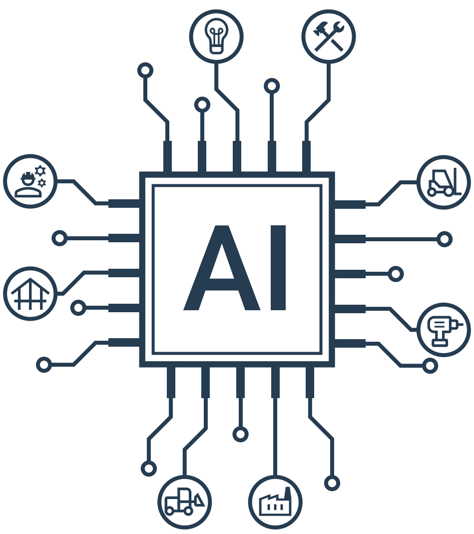
At HAE EHA, we work with a range of specialist providers and CITB to help support our members and our Learning and Development Officer Nikki Wyllie is always happy to help – so please reach out to her if you'd like to know more.

I was also pleased to learn that The Power of Events has secured funding through a Purple Guide Grant to support the setup and delivery of 500 Experience of Work opportunities. The hire industry is fighting a lack of skilled workers and this not-for-profit scheme is seeking to address that by teaching young people about careers in event setup, warehouses, and venue.

Founder and CEO Rick Stainton, who previously led Smyle, a multi-million pound event agency, launched the initiative in 2023 to unite and showcase the UK's events industry and, as an industry, we are heavily invested in its drive to lobby the government, solve skills shortages, and measure the massive economic value of the hire sector. Rick and his team have worked tirelessly over the past three years to achieve this.

Whilst I'm in the process of extending congratulations, I must also mention how well-deserved the recent King's Police Medal presentation to Andy Huddleston was. Andy Huddleston, who received the medal from His Royal Highness Prince William at Windsor Castle, has carried out invaluable work over many years tackling plant and equipment theft with NCATT.

AI adoption in construction and hire is increasing at a pace, with companies now moving from basic trials to using AI as a standard tool to solve worker shortages, reduce costs, and even seek to lower accident risks. The need to increase awareness and understanding of it use prompted HAE EHA to set up the Digital & Systems Committee.



The newly-formed committee is made up of experts in software and technology from across the hire industry and its aim is to highlight areas of risk or low awareness and draft relevant guidance for our members. Feedback from members will be invaluable for this as it will help to demonstrate how they currently perceive AI, and how, if at all, they use it. I'd urge all of you to take our AI survey as its results will help us to deduce members' level of engagement with AI, so that we know what support and guidance would be beneficial for them. You can take the survey by visiting **https://bit.ly/4oMpf97**.

The results of the ERA/IRN RentalTracker survey for Q2 of 2026 were also published in July and I'd like to thank all the HAE EHA members who took part in the survey. The data gathered will be extremely valuable for measuring the rental economy across the UK and Europe.

Before I sign off, I'd like to draw members' attention to the CECE Congress 2026 which this year will take place in London from October 27th to 29th as the CECE presidency is currently held by the UK. Hosted by the Construction Equipment Association, this huge event will bring together global construction industry leaders, to share insights and discuss the challenges facing our industry.

Attending the congress offers hire professionals a great opportunity to network with more than 150 European industry leaders and gain key insights into market trends, geopolitical challenges, and technology and I'd urge members to attend if they can. <<

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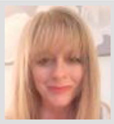

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REGULARS

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR ...

IT'S been a time of great change since I last penned my intro for 'Interface On Hire'.

The recent transition in the UK government has brought about some regulatory and economic shifts that the plant, tool, and equipment hire industry will be monitoring closely. As new legislative agendas take shape, hire companies will be looking to navigate evolving standards, shifting infrastructure spending priorities, and more as staying ahead of these changes will be vital for maintaining profitability and operational efficiency. Our Public Affairs team is closely monitoring the situation and its latest updates can be found on pages 20 and 21.

Another change that's come into play recently is the legislation concerning cross-border hiring. Our SafeHire team gives full details about this, and some of the potential pitfalls to avoid, in our feature on page 28.

Skills are a central part of change generally as they enable us to stay abreast of changing business landscapes and equip us for the future, so I'd urge you to check out our latest training and development article on page 22. We detail how, as part of the CITB Specialist Upskilling Project, HAE EHA is offering members a free, impartial training needs analysis (TNA). This is designed to help them identify current skills gaps, plan for future development, and make informed decisions about training and funding opportunities.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and automation are major changes that continue to evolve – and are currently driving insurance claims. The HAE Insurance Services and EHA Insurance Services team explains why – and how to avoid the dangers – in its latest feature on page 18, and we also detail how the battery landscape is changing for electric hire machinery and equipment in our focus feature on page 24.

Finally, as always, it's a pleasure to tell you about some of our members' own changes – in terms of business updates and achievements! Be sure to catch up with the 'Member News' and 'New To The Crew' sections, and don't forget to keep me up to speed with your own news – you can contact me at editorial@hae.org.uk and if you have anything you'd like to promote, be sure to drop Theresa a line at advertising@hae.org.uk.

Stephanie Cornwall
Editor

New generator fleets for Dumfries and Kent hirers

DUMFRIES-based Hire and Supplies Limited, a supplier of a wide range of tools and equipment, has invested in a fleet of power generators, manufactured by power generation specialist Trime.

The order for a line of 6kVA, 10kVA and 20kVA sets was placed by Hire and Supplies Director David Chandler who said he took the decision to move away from the company's previous supplier.

"We like to work with in-brand stables so that our engineers become accustomed to the products," he said, adding that the company now has 40 of the Trime lighting towers in its fleet.

Hire and Supplies has branches in Dumfries, Oban and Carlisle and covers a large delivery area throughout the West of Scotland, Cumbria, and further afield. It provides large machinery such as excavators and dumpers to essential site equipment, including generators and water pumps. The Hire and Supplies fleet is regularly updated with new machinery and it also has an extensive range of tools, consumables and PPE for sale, utilising many leading brand names.

Kent-based PG Site Services, a family-run supplier of plant and machinery, has taken delivery of a substantial fleet of power generators, manufactured by Trime.

The order comprises three 6kVA, two 10kVA and a further two 20kVA units, alongside one 45kVA and two 60kVA sets.

PG Site Services Director Paul Goodger said the company was prompted to make the order as its sister company, PG Sweepers, has a fleet of Trime lighting towers.

PG Site Services operates throughout London, Essex and the South East, serving the construction and demolition markets. Founded in 2008 with just a small fleet of mini diggers, it has since grown into a leading supplier of most types of diggers, excavators, rollers, dozers, dump trucks, and telehandlers. This equipment is all available to hire self-drive or with a qualified, experienced operator.

A substantial fleet of Trime power generators has been delivered to family company PG Site Services.

Hazard awareness videos launched

MENTOR Training, a provider of material handling equipment training, has launched a series of forklift hazard perception videos.

Launched to coincide with National Forklift Safety Day last month, the videos have been developed for Counterbalance, Reach and PPT operators and feature challenges designed to help improve hazard awareness and reinforce safe working practices in warehouse environments.

National Forklift Safety Day, which took place on June 10th, is organised annually by the UK Material Handling Association (UKMHA), is one of the material handling industry's leading safety initiatives. The campaign aims to promote safer workplaces and raise awareness of the importance of effective training and risk management across the sector.

This year's theme, Technician Safety, highlighted the importance of protecting not only operators, but everyone working around material-handling equipment.

Mentor Training's Forklift Hazard Perception Challenge features realistic warehouse scenarios filmed in a large-scale distribution setting, from an operator's perspective. The videos encourage viewers to identify potential hazards while navigating a warehouse environment, both on foot and from the driver's position on the truck.

Commercial Director Adam Smith said: "National Forklift Safety Day is an important opportunity to reinforce safe working practices across the industry. Our Hazard Perception Challenge has been designed to help people identify common workplace risks and improve their awareness to enhance safety within their own operations."

He added: "The videos work similarly to the hazard perception element of a driving theory test. Viewers watch from the operator's point of view and are challenged to spot hazards as they appear on-screen. I'm very impressed with how effective these videos are and am excited for others to give them a try – people may find it surprising just how little forklift operators can see from their seat!"

Rebrand brings software offering into one recognisable portfolio

A REBRAND has brought together a rental software portfolio under one recognisable name.

The move has been made by Klipboard (formerly Kerridge Commercial Systems), a provider of industry-specific business software solutions.

It has now brought together the software solutions formerly known as inspHire Office, and Current RMS, alongside OnRent Go, into a newly-unified OnRent portfolio.

The newly unified OnRent portfolio comprises:

- **OnRent Go** (newer to market) - Modern, cloud-based SaaS solution designed for small to medium construction and equipment rental companies
- **OnRent Events** (formerly Current RMS) - Purpose-built rental management software for the events industry, including AV, lighting, weddings, parties, and event production
- **OnRent Office** (formerly inspHire Office) - Comprehensive solution for medium to large rental businesses
- **OnRent One** (formerly inspHire Corporate) - Enterprise-level platform for multi-location, multi-country and multi-currency rental operations

Managing Director Graham Dobbs said: "By bringing our rental solutions together under the OnRent brand, we're creating clarity for our customers while demonstrating our commitment to innovation across the entire hire sector, from small regional businesses to global enterprises."

Customers will continue to receive the same trusted software, support, and expertise they've come to rely on, he stressed, adding that all existing features, functionality, and service commitments remain unchanged.

Director of Product Management Mark Taylor added: "For our inspHire and Current RMS customers, this is about continuity and confidence. You're not switching software, you're gaining a stronger brand, unified support, and a clear roadmap as part of the broader Klipboard family."

The OnRent rebrand spans construction equipment hire, events rental, and general hire sectors.

OnRent also benefits from Klipboard AI, the company's embedded intelligence platform designed for real-world operational challenges experienced by rental businesses.

The OnRent branding is being rolled out in phases regionally, across all customer touchpoints, including product interfaces, documentation, support channels, and marketing materials. Customers will receive communication and support throughout the transition.

Relive the celebrations and check out this year's winners

THE 2026 Hire Awards of Excellence, which took place at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, London included another new category, along with three special personal achievement awards.

You can read all about the awards, and find full details of winners in our special 2026 Hire Awards Of Excellence supplement.

Read or download it here for free: **https://bit.ly/4uC1X85** or visit the 'Interface On Hire' section on the HAE EHA website's news section here **https://bit.ly/4dz9oHn** <<

Portable power units win European title

PORTABLE power specialist Instagrid has won Product of the Year at the 2026 European Rental Awards (ERA).

The advanced battery technology specialist won the award for its Instagrid ONE (230v) and Instagrid GO (110v) portable power units at the ERA awards held in Maastricht, Netherlands.

The ERA committee evaluated entries on their innovation, sustainability, scalability, and ability to deliver future-proof value and return on investment. As Europe's premier awards programme for the equipment rental industry, the ERA Awards also place strong emphasis on products designed and manufactured within Europe.

Instagrid's One and Go portable power units were deemed to deliver on all judging criteria, with 60,000 units sold globally to-date, offering a direct alternative to traditional generator power.

Used by major rental partners including Kiloutou, Sunbelt Rental and Loxam, the zero emission and zero noise units are already providing popular with thousands of professionals who work off grid.

Sander Spooler, Head of Sales, Benelux and Charlotte Evans, Senior Country Marketing Manager, UK were on hand to collect the award.

Sandy said: "We are thrilled to represent our founders Andreas Sedlmayr and Sebastian Berning who made portable, professional-grade battery power a reality. By investing in safer, cleaner worksites, our rental partners are driving real change across our industry, delivering cleaner power to customers across multiple sectors."

Online shop now integrated

THE HAE EHA online shop, HAE EHA Essentials Direct, has now been integrated into its main website to make it easier for members to access member benefits and place orders together.

The shop gives members exclusive access to more than 200 products that support safety, compliance, and best practice throughout the hire process. From testing and inspection to collection, cleaning and servicing, Essentials Direct offers a wide range of practical products designed to help members advise, support and safeguard their customers.

Members can now access Essentials Direct using their existing members area username and password. Their 30% members' discount will automatically be available when shopping.

Delivery costs will be calculated according to the total value of an order with the following rates applicable:

- Orders up to £100 – £7.50 delivery
- Orders between £100 and £500 – £13.50 delivery
- Orders between £500 and £1,000 – £20.64 delivery
- Orders over £1,000 – Free delivery

New barrier system at Premier League title celebration

WHEN Arsenal Football Club lifted its first Premier League trophy in 22 years, Sunbelt Rentals UK & Ireland provided the essential safety infrastructure, utilising the event to debut a new generation of barrier systems for the first time.

Tasked with securing two back-to-back mass events in May, the company worked alongside Arsenal FC, Heart Productions, and CBRE to manage a 37,000-capacity Champions League Final screening and an open-top bus parade through North London. The weekend served as the critical first deployment of Sunbelt Rentals' latest crowd-management technology, designed to provide a more efficient and secure 'invisible backbone' for large-scale public celebrations.

Sunbelt Rentals teams worked through the night to install the infrastructure by 4AM on the day of the parade. The system was strategically placed to secure access points and manage route control before the four-bus procession departed Emirates Stadium at 2PM.

The deployment highlighted the system's operational flexibility, allowing for a phased derig to begin immediately after the event ended, even as crowds were still dispersing.

Director of Barriers & Fencing at Sunbelt Rentals, Mark Fisher, said: "Being involved in two events of this scale across one weekend was a brilliant opportunity for our teams. While fans were celebrating in the stadium and across the streets of London, there was a huge amount of planning and operational delivery happening behind the scenes to help keep the events running safely and smoothly. I'm incredibly proud of the teams involved and the way they delivered across the entire weekend."

The operation forms part of the company's wider event infrastructure capability, supporting major sporting, entertainment and public events across the UK and Ireland through specialist equipment, nationwide coverage and operational expertise.

A glimpse into Frank's past - and his vision for the future

FRANK Andrews, Sales Director at Golz UK, gave his insights on the future of portable power technology and shared details of his career during a recent interview with HAE EHA Commercial Director Neil Bravery and Director of Certification Services Carl Bartlett.

Frank described how Golz, which manufactures and supplies professional diamond tools, core drilling machinery, and concrete sawing equipment for the construction, hire, and civil engineering industries, evolved from its initial beginnings as a logging and timber trading sole proprietorship, to its current global status servicing 40 countries worldwide during the recent podcast.

He described how it grew from its origins in Germany, across Europe and into the UK, expanding with the acquisition of other businesses.

Frank then went on to speak about specialised diamond tools including BattPak portable power technology in the construction sector, while detailing advancements in smaller machinery technology. He emphasised the BattPak's safety features, including lithium-iron-phosphate technology to prevent thermal runaway, and noted its ability to utilise Type 2 EV charging points for fast charging.

He highlighted that portable power solutions such as those in the BattPak range will utilise NMC (nickel manganese cobalt) cells that prevent thermal runaway and can be fast-charged using the UK's widespread Type 2 EV charging network. Frank highlighted the value of fast charging in remote locations, and adapting to modern infrastructure.

"The NMC, the nickel magnetic cobalt battery cells, are as safe as you're going to get because you can't pierce them and they don't suffer from thermal runaway," he said, going on to add that there were multiple charging options on the battery packs.

"We're aware that if you've got a portable battery, you haven't always got mains power to charge it from, but you will have type 2 EV charge points up and down the country," he said.

The discussion also covered his career background. Frank's career in the construction equipment and sales industry has evolved over a number of years, with previous national sales roles at Pro-Point Equipment and Addax International as well as Golz.

He first joined Golz eight years ago as National Sales Manager and became Sales Director in 2019.

During the interview, he noted how the industry is moving at a pace toward emission-free and noise-reduced job sites, with less reliance on traditional petrol and diesel generators, stating that future tool development will be directly tied to portable energy storage.

"This allows high-demand heavy machinery to operate effectively without a main grid connection," he said, citing why he sees the BattPak range as a prime example of this evolution.

"This technology bridges the gap by driving professional-grade diamond tools, floor saws, and core drills using scalable, zero-emission battery power," he said. "While designed for drilling and sawing in construction, portable battery systems are increasingly adopted by other sectors, such as film and TV production, requiring silent, off-grid power."

HAE EHA HIRE CERTIFICATION SERVICES AUDITOR

Nationwide (based South of England)
Full-time, Permanent

JOB DESCRIPTION

HAE EHA's Hire Certification Services provides a framework for delivering best practice and high standards for companies who hire and sell plant, tools and equipment and provide equipment and services for events throughout the UK and Ireland. We are committed to ensuring hire businesses, suppliers and manufacturers have the appropriate certifications and accreditations in place for all projects undertaken within the construction and event industries in both the private and public sectors. SafeHire Certification is a BSI Private Standard created and written for the hire industry with the help and guidance of British Standards Institute and the support of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Due to the success and continued growth of SafeHire Certification, HAE EHA is looking to appoint an experienced hire industry auditor to join our team to provide SafeHire audits of hire and rental organisations throughout the UK.

The successful candidate will possess the ability to perform audits including technical assessments to evaluate the competence and conformity of members against the SafeHire Private Standard, SSIP Approved Core Criteria and other regulatory compliance.

You will have up-to-date experience, knowledge and understanding of the hire sector for plant, tools and equipment. A minimum of 5 years' relevant industrial experience is required, with a minimum of 2 years in the last 5 years working in the hire industry. A NEBOSH NGC3 Certificate qualification / Equivalent or Higher is required. Ideally you will hold an ISO Lead Auditor qualification. You will be required to successfully manage relationships with members in order to achieve delivery of objectives and deliver the value of SafeHire Certification as part of HAE EHA membership. A full UK driving licence essential.

Salary – Competitive + Car Allowance

For further information about the SafeHire Certification scheme visit www.safehire.org.uk.

If you have the skills and experience we are looking for please click below to apply, sending your CV and a covering letter.

Celebrations all round

Apprentices and team mates celebrate their achievements over past year, while their employer clinches two awards of its own.

Apprentices and team mates came together recently for an annual awards celebration.

THE skills of the future were in the spotlight when apprentices and team mates came together recently for an annual awards celebration.

The 2026 edition of the Sunbelt Rentals UK and Ireland Apprenticeship Awards recognised team mates undertaking apprenticeship programmes at all stages of their careers. Held in a new venue at the Heart of England Conference Centre, the awards brought together apprentices, teammates and leaders from across the company to celebrate achievement and professional development.

Alongside recognising early career apprentices, the event acknowledged those who are using apprenticeships to develop new skills, gain qualifications and progress their careers.

Opening the event, CEO Phil Parker spoke about the power of potential and the importance of investing in future talent. He emphasised that the future of the company will be built by people with the skills, ambition and willingness to keep learning, highlighting the role apprenticeships play in creating opportunities for career progression, personal growth and future leadership across the business.

The event showcased a wide range of development journeys across engineering, operations, leadership, professional services and technical disciplines.

Head of Talent Jenny Parry outlined how learning and development programmes are supporting team mates to gain qualifications, broaden their expertise and prepare for future opportunities.

Chief Transformation Director, Charlotte Bennett, said: "It was fantastic to see so many team mates in one room who are investing in their growth, whether they're starting their careers, building new skills or preparing for future leadership roles. By investing in our people today, we're building the capability, expertise and talent that will drive our business forward tomorrow."

British Forces support recognised

The company itself has also received two notable awards recently.

The first is the Advocate of the Year – Organisation at the 2026 British Forces in Business Awards.

The 2026 British Forces in Business Awards recognised the company's support and mentoring with the 'Advocate of the Year' award.

This award recognised its commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community and the achievements of veteran team mates across the business.

The recognition reflects a long-term commitment to helping veterans move into meaningful civilian roles, with more than 185 veterans currently employed across the business and more than 60 joining in the past year. Veterans represented almost 7% of all 2025 hires, supported by a Veterans Programme focused on practical recruitment pathways, peer mentoring, ambassador advocacy and trusted partnerships.

Working with partners including Walking With The Wounded, the programme has helped achieve a 87% first-year retention rate among veteran hires and 22% leadership progression.

Its other recent achievement was the EcoVadis Platinum award, which placed the business in the top 1% of companies assessed globally for sustainability performance.

Awarded by EcoVadis, it recognises strong performance across four key areas: Environment, labour and human rights, ethics and sustainable procurement. <<

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Stifling the scammers

Dr Marco Lafrentz, MEF Global Board Member and Chair of the Anti-Fraud Program explains why practical action is needed to protect the hire sector from text message scams.

Dr Marco Lafrentz, Chair of the MEF Anti-Fraud Program.

TEXT messaging has become a critical part of everyday digital life for tool and equipment rental companies as automated text messages are one of the fastest ways to coordinate high-value logistics and time-sensitive returns.

In addition, contractors use texting as their main form of communication because they are frequently on the move, on the tools, or working in noisy environments. Texts continue to offer a convenient way to document changes, send progress photos, and coordinate schedules without interrupting the workflow.

Text messaging also supports customer communications, account access, authentication, and financial transactions for billions of businesses and consumers worldwide. It is this level of trust and ubiquity that has made messaging one of the most attractive targets for criminals.

The tool and equipment rental sector is one of the more heavily-targeted industries. Fraudsters use fake text interviews, delivery fees and check fraud schemes to con both the businesses and their customers out of money.

What was once viewed as a developing threat has now become a persistent and systemic challenge that demands industry-wide attention.

Recent figures illustrate the extent of the problem. In the United Kingdom, data from financial institutions and law enforcement agencies points to a significant rise in impersonation fraud and SIM-related criminal activity linked to messaging services. Industry analysis reports growth of more than 1,000% in certain categories of SIM-swap incidents, reflecting the growing importance of mobile numbers within digital identity and authentication systems. (Source: UK Finance and industry fraud reporting summaries, 2024–2025.)

While the monetary losses are considerable, the wider implications extend beyond financial damage. Every successful scam weakens confidence in digital services and communications channels that individuals rely on daily.

Why messaging?

Criminals naturally focus on channels that generate results, and messaging continues to be highly effective because people trust and engage with it. The same attributes that make messaging valuable for legitimate enterprises also make it highly appealing to fraudsters.

At the same time, mobile numbers have evolved far beyond their original purpose. For many of us, a phone number now functions as a trusted digital identifier. As more services rely on phone numbers as trusted identifiers, the value associated with them continues to increase.

This concentration of trust creates opportunities for criminals. When attackers exploit a phone number or impersonate a trusted sender, consumers often suffer the immediate consequences through financial losses, account compromise, or identity theft. Brands also experience reputational damage when fraudsters misuse their identities, regardless of whether the organisation itself has been breached.

Although mobile operators and CPaaS providers are not always the direct victims of these attacks, they still bear many of the resulting costs. Abuse generates additional network burdens, creates operational challenges, and attracts increasing regulatory oversight. This is precisely why no single organisation can address messaging fraud in isolation.

Collective protection

Today there is a growing recognition that messaging fraud cannot be viewed purely as a technical network problem or solely as a content moderation issue. It is a challenge that affects the entire ecosystem.

Every stakeholder sees only part of the picture. Consumers encounter the scams. Brands experience impersonation. Financial institutions identify suspicious activity. Network operators observe traffic patterns. Messaging providers monitor delivery channels. No single organization has complete visibility, but each contributes information that helps build a clearer understanding of emerging threats.

As a result, collaboration has become essential. Common frameworks and industry success provide the foundation for coordinated action. However, cooperation alone is not enough. The real test is whether intelligence can be exchanged, analysed, and acted upon quickly enough to stop fraud before consumers are affected.

Standards and operational action

The messaging industry has invested heavily in recent years to establish best-practice guidance, anti-fraud frameworks, codes of conduct, and industry charters. These efforts have been instrumental in creating shared expectations and helping organisations understand their responsibilities.

Such initiatives are indispensable because they establish a common understanding of the problem and encourage a consistent approach across markets.

However, fraudsters constantly adapt. For that reason, preventing fraud ultimately depends on effective execution. Success requires effective tools, real-time intelligence, rapid decision-making, and operational collaboration capable of keeping pace with modern threats.

As Chair of the Mobile Ecosystem Forum's Anti-Fraud Programme, I have focused on helping organisations translate broad agreement into tangible outcomes. This includes supporting initiatives such as sender identification registries, intelligence-sharing programmes, and implementation guidance that organizations can apply across markets, rather than remaining theoretical concepts.

Real-world collaboration

A recent project in the United Kingdom demonstrates the value of turning collaboration into action.

The initiative brought together a mobile network operator, a major banking organisation, and MEF. Rather than simply studying fraud trends after incidents had already occurred, the participants shared intelligence on active campaigns and applied that information directly within network operations to prevent harmful messages from reaching customers.

The impact was significant. In just one month, nearly 250,000 fraudulent messages linked to more than 400 separate scam campaigns were intercepted and blocked.

The significance of this example extends beyond the number of messages blocked. It highlights the importance of scale. To achieve meaningful industry-wide impact, intelligence must move efficiently between organisations, markets, and platforms. Information needs to be collected, standardised, and distributed in a manner that allows multiple participants to benefit from shared visibility.

It also indicates why collaboration is key. The tool and equipment rental sector needs to work together, share intelligence and help mobile network operators block fraudulent messages before they arrive. This cannot be done on an individual level. It has to involve all stakeholders.

Industry organisations can play an important role in enabling that coordination while complementing, rather than replacing, the responsibilities of regulators and commercial service providers.

Self-regulation and industry leadership

Around the world, policymakers and regulators are devoting increasing attention to messaging fraud. This heightened focus is understandable given the growing impact of scams on consumers, businesses, and financial systems.

Yet regulation cannot evolve as quickly as the threat landscape. Attackers can change tactics in days or weeks, while regulatory processes often require significantly longer timelines.

This is where industry-led initiatives become particularly valuable. Self-regulatory measures can complement formal regulation by enabling faster responses to new threats while maintaining alignment with broader public-policy objectives.

Programmes such as sender ID registries, anti-fraud charters, and industry best-practice frameworks provide effective mechanisms for rapid response. They also demonstrate accountability and maturity within the sector, helping regulators assess how effectively the industry is addressing risk.

The scale of the challenge remains considerable. Research from the Communications Fraud Control Association and telecom security specialists estimates that global telecommunications fraud losses exceeded $40 billion in 2024, with messaging-based scams accounting for an increasing proportion of overall losses. (Source: CFCA Global Fraud Loss Survey and telecom fraud landscape reports, 2024–2025.) >>

> "What was once viewed as a developing threat has now become a persistent and systemic challenge that demands industry-wide attention."

Consistency vs novelty

There is no single technology, platform, or initiative capable of eliminating fraud permanently. Long-term success depends on sustained commitment rather than one-off interventions.

Progress comes from expanding proven approaches, encouraging broader adoption across regions, and preserving effective partnerships over time. It also requires investment in shared infrastructure that allows trusted intelligence to be exchanged securely and efficiently among stakeholders.

Industry working groups, collaborative programmes, and face-to-face forums remain valuable because they help maintain alignment and momentum. Nevertheless, genuine impact only occurs when commitments are translated into ongoing action.

When organisations consistently implement agreed measures, confidence in messaging ecosystems can gradually be restored and strengthened.

Future determined by execution

The messaging industry has reached a critical moment. Fraud will continue to evolve, and new attack methods will undoubtedly emerge. The key question is whether the ecosystem can adapt quickly enough to stay ahead.

Throughout my work across messaging, digital identity, and fraud prevention, one lesson has remained constant: Coordinated action delivers results. When stakeholders work together and execute decisively, meaningful protection is possible. When organizations are slow to respond, criminals exploit the opportunity.

Frameworks establish a roadmap. Collaboration creates shared purpose. Execution is what ultimately safeguards consumers, preserves brand trust, and protects the integrity of messaging channels. <<

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Marco Lafrentz is a MEF Global Board Member and Chair of the Anti-Fraud Program. The Mobile Ecosystem Forum (MEF) is a global trade association founded in 2000 and headquartered in the United Kingdom, with members spanning the international mobile ecosystem. As an independent industry body, MEF promotes cross-sector collaboration, best practices, anti-fraud initiatives, and sustainable monetisation strategies. The organisation provides platforms for networking, cooperation, and the development of solutions that address shared industry challenges.

www.mobileecosystemforum.com

HAEEHA MEMBER NEWS

320 brave soaring temperatures to complete run

Almost 320 runners braved one of the hottest nights of the year to complete the 5 race and fun run.

JCB employees joined a host of club runners to complete the gruelling five-mile course around JCB's World HQ at Rocester, including the steep hill on Stubwood Hollow, where JCB's Worldwide Marketing Director Adrian Hall drenched sweltering athletes with a hosepipe.

JCB Deputy Chairman George Bamford and his family were among those who took part. George said: "It is just amazing to see so many people here, and so many families. I'm proud to be running with my family. We talk so much about JCB being a family business and this event is proof of that."

Three generations of one family took part in the two-mile fun run – crossing the finishing line hand in hand. JCB employee Billy Sowter, 61, of Uttoxeter, completed the course with his son Liam, 37, daughter-in-law Amy, 34 and their daughter Rosie, aged five. Billy said: "It was fantastic to run this as a family. The atmosphere was amazing and I'm proud of little Rosie for completing the course."

Former JCB employees Charles Bevan and Mick Grindey kept up their record of running in every single JCB Lakeside 5 race since its started by taking part in the event. Charles, who turns 80 in September, dressed as Toy story hero Woody to run with his son Jason who dressed as Buzz Lightyear.

Retained Staffordshire firefighter Jason Blount, of Newcastle-under-Lyme, joined 18 fellow members of Silverdale Running Club – less than a day after he helped battle a major building blaze in Stoke-on-Trent and before he'd managed to grab any sleep. He'd been called out early the previous morning, fought the fire through to 6am and still managed to get to work at 7am. He came straight to Rocester from work and was back on firefighter call at 10pm. Jason, 50, finished the five-mile route in 41 minutes.

Tom Bill from the TP Triathlon team, who described the race as "tough, but brilliant" raced home to win the men's race, in 28 minutes 43 seconds, while Hollie Wall, running her second Lakeside 5, was first woman home in 34 minutes 33 seconds.

JCB Golf & Country Club Greenkeeper Ruarc Grant was the first employee to finish, in 29 minutes, 32 seconds. Ruarc is currently hard at work putting the finishing event.

Meanwhile, JCB's first female finisher Emma Langford, an Electrical Engineer in Product Innovation at the World HQ who plays for Uttoxeter Rugby Club and completed the race in 44 minutes and nine seconds, said: "I don't know how I've did it. Getting up that hill in this heat was so tough."

Emma received the Steph Cordall Memorial Trophy which celebrates the life of an employee who worked for JCB for almost 40 years and was among the 95 competitors on the starting line at the first ever race in 1983. Steph, of Cheadle, died in May 2023 aged 60, and JCB established the trophy in her memory. It was presented to Emma by Steph's husband Martin and son Adam.

Try out India's first fully-electric mini excavator in the UK

HIRE companies interested in testing an electric mini excavator or viewing a live demonstration can now arrange this through the manufacturer's designated regional contacts.

The INJIN-Corpe MEX 1.0 electric mini excavator is now available in the UK, having been introduced into the market in late 2025 and early 2026, when the UK division officially began setting up initial deployment sites.

It has started taking demo bookings and orders for the fully electric, zero-emission digger.

The expansion into the UK market aligns with the company's rollout of its sub-2 tonne battery-powered digger, which is targeted toward residential construction and low-noise urban job sites.

The machines offer UK hire companies zero tailpipe emissions, a 60 dB ultra-low noise profile, and 20% lower operating costs than diesel models. This allows rental fleets to supply eco-friendly, compliant machines for restricted urban sites and residential projects.

The electric powertrain removes the need for diesel engine maintenance, leading to a stronger Return on Investment (ROI) over the machine's lifespan.

Headquartered in Haryana, India, Injin-CORPE was formed in 2022 and developed India's first fully electric mini excavator. It supplies to and runs technology centres throughout the EU and the UK.

Acquisition brings forecasting and theft avoidance advantages to hirers

CATERPILLAR'S recent acquisition of Californian spatial data and drone technology company, Skycatch, will bring new future benefits to plant and fleet hirers by integrating AI-driven spatial data and near-real-time digital twins directly into Cat's MineStar and RPMGlobal systems.

MineStar, an onboard technology and automation platform, and RPMGlobal off-board planning and scheduling software are available with various core mining machines such as haul trucks, dozers, loading tools, drills, underground equipment and graders.

The integration of Skycatch technology will help rental companies track exactly where equipment is on a site, prevent machine damage, and optimise heavy equipment movement.

High-precision mapping tracks which machines are working on harsh terrain which hire companies can use to predict when equipment needs parts, while digital twins (virtual models of actual construction sites) allow rental managers to check if hired machines are straying into dangerous zones. This can help avoid rented equipment being damaged or stolen, and hire companies will also be able to analyse exact data on how customers use their machines.

Biggest ever X-series debut

THE new 520X crawler excavator, JCB's largest and most powerful X Series machine to date, was recently unveiled at Hillhead 2026, the Derbyshire exhibition for the quarrying, construction, and recycling industries.

The 50-tonne class excavator has been developed for heavy-duty applications and marks a major expansion of the company's Heavyline range. It was joined at the exhibition by its 40-tonne class stablemate, the new 420X crawler excavator

Building on the success of the JCB 370X, the new excavator has been designed to handle the most arduous applications, from mass excavation and aggregate extraction to demolition and crusher loading.

At the same event, the company previewed its new 715 articulated dump truck, the compact two-axle ADT which delivers a 12,750kg payload and has been engineered to offer high productivity and fast cycle times in off-road hauling applications, and two new wheeled loading shovels.

The liability pitfalls

AI and automation are driving insurance claims. The HAE Insurance Services and EHA Insurance Services team explains why – and how to avoid the dangers.

72% of UK professional indemnity market respondents say AI is increasing professional risk exposure. Photo: Tara Winstead on Pexels

ARTIFICIAL Intelligence and automation have spread everywhere in recent years, including into our day-to-day work, becoming a useful tool for businesses.

They can help to draft reports, analyse data, make decisions and interact with clients.

However, as revealed in a 2024 report by Clyde & Co, 72% of UK professional indemnity market respondents say AI is increasing professional risk exposure.

The truth is that AI can make mistakes too, but when it makes a mistake, who's responsible for it? AI can't face consequences because it's a tool, not a person.

AI requires oversight from the business, so it's the business that is held responsible for any errors that might have slipped through the cracks. If an AI produces content for the business and that content isn't double-checked and reviewed by someone, it's the fault of the business. The liability continues to sit with the business, so saying that the AI made the mistake won't cut it.

What to look out for

When using AI tools, there are three areas to look out for.

The first is AI hallucinations. AI can seem like magic, seemingly producing answers out of thin air to our queries, or generating pages of content from data sets in a matter of seconds. Unfortunately, they can occasionally produce answers out of thin air, with no basis in reality at all. These 'AI hallucinations' happen when the AI chatbot confidently answers a question with a statement that is completely wrong and seems to be entirely made up. It's therefore important to double-check every answer that the chatbot gives you before using it in content for the business.

Bias and data issues are the second topic that needs to be on your radar. Businesses need to stay aware of the possibility that these can result from use of AI. If an AI model is trained on data that's unbalanced or incorrect, it won't necessarily flag the issue but will simply give results based on that data, meaning that the results could be unfair or even discriminatory. Data should be double-checked before being fed to an AI, and the same goes for the results given. Don't just assume that the AI is always right.

Finally, there's also a lack of explainability that comes with using AI. We often don't understand how an AI system comes to a conclusion or makes a prediction – and this can lead to a headache for businesses if the AI makes a mistake. Strict data governance laws (like GDPR) say that people have "the right to an explanation" for automated decisions. If a business fails to provide this, it can lead to severe penalties.

The lack of explainability goes even further. You may find that stakeholders and customers are uncomfortable about automated outputs if they can't see the reasoning behind them, and without the visibility into AI reasoning, your business may inherit hidden biases which were embedded in the training data. And if your AI chatbot hallucinates or makes a bad decision, it can be difficult for your software developers and engineers to find out why.

Avoid costly claims

Even when you've done everything right, misunderstandings or mistakes can lead to claims that are costly and time consuming to deal with.

Any HAE EHA members looking to review their current professional indemnity insurance cover or explore their options can contact the HAE Insurance Services and EHA Insurance Services team for help in these areas. The team takes time to understand how businesses operate so they can help you find cover that truly reflects your risks. <<

To find out more about cyber insurance, call the Insurance Services team on 0330 018 2299 or email **insuranceservices@hae.org.uk**. More information is also available by visiting HAE EHA partner Everywhen's dedicated cyber insurance page at **http://bit.ly/3K2UM6l**.

HAE Insurance Services and EHA Insurance Services are trading names of Advisory Insurance Brokers Limited, which is authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (Firm Reference Number 313250).

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Photo: Christophe Lesimple on Flickr

All change in Downing Street, Whitehall and Manchester

The HAE EHA team details the changes that have come about since the new Prime Minister came into post, and considers some of the implications for now and the future.

The new Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, remains a largely unknown and untested leader to many in the country.
Photo: House of Commons

NEW UK Prime Minister, Andy Burnham MP has carried out a major reshuffle of the Cabinet and Minister of State-level roles following his recent appointment.

Around half the former Cabinet have left office, others have moved roles, while a significant number have remained in post. Many of the junior ministers have stayed in their jobs, probably to provide continuity. The latest list of government ministers (subject to likely further announcements) can be found at **https://bit.ly/3RSDFIC**

Immediate priorities have focused on the cost of living and adherence to the fiscal rules introduced by the Starmer Administration in 2024. The new Chancellor, John Healey, is an experienced senior minister and has previously held office in the Treasury. His appointment was a surprise to many observers and the market appears calmed by his moving into No.11.

Initial measures to help with the cost-of-living pressures are:

- Temporary removal of VAT from domestic electricity bills from this October
- Reduction in the cap on bus fares to £2 from January 2027.

It is anticipated that a major fiscal event (Budget) will take place in October this year.

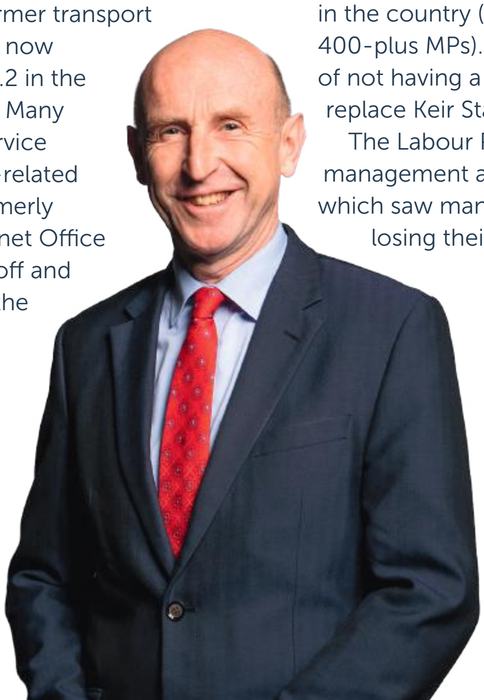
There have also been some changes to the so-called 'machinery of government' - principally the shift of responsibilities from the now defunct Department of Science, Innovation and Technology, mostly to an expanded Department of Business, Innovation, Science and Trade (or DBIST) headed by the returning Secretary of State Jonathan Reynolds. Artificial Intelligence (AI) now has a dedicated cabinet-attending minister. The Cabinet Office is remodelled to form part of the new Office for the PM and Cabinet (OPMC) headed by Louise Haigh (the former transport secretary and now effectively no.2 in the government). Many of the civil service employment-related functions formerly with the Cabinet Office will be hived off and managed by the most senior civil servant, freeing up capacity for delivering PM Burnham's priorities.

More details are available here: **https://bit.ly/3TiSlBd.**

There may be other changes announced both to personnel and structures. The creation of No. 10 North based in Manchester (under direct political leadership of Louise Haigh) is a significant change and likely to result in driving further devolution and local growth measures. These include functions shifted from the Housing, Communities & Local Government Department (which is once again headed by Angela Rayner) and the Treasury.

It was a busy week in the political world which left us with much to digest. However, it is worth remembering that the same challenges remain around a weak economy, prolonged low growth, high cost of living pressures and rising global instability. In addition, Prime Minister Burnham remains a largely unknown and untested leader to many in the country (and to many of his 400-plus MPs). This is largely the result of not having a national contest to replace Keir Starmer.

The Labour Party will need careful management after a bruising reshuffle which saw many top Starmer loyalists losing their ministerial jobs. <<



The market appears calmed by new Chancellor, John Healey, moving into No.11.
Photo: House of Commons

Spillover from the VAT

Our Public Affairs team looks at the latest government decision on domestic VAT and what it means for the hire sector.

FOR machinery hire companies, the recent government announcement regarding the abolishment of VAT on domestic electric bills alters operational dynamics for remote, site-based, and electrified equipment.

The announcement has stated that VAT on household electricity bills will drop from 5% to 0% from October 1st.

Like the majority of industries, most hire sector businesses and non-domestic users will continue to pay the standard 20% VAT rate on their electricity bills, but companies are being advised to focus on the following actionable strategies to review and optimise spending:

- Audit remote power solutions: Re-evaluate the cost-effectiveness of hiring out battery banks, solar generators, and hybrid power systems for construction sites. Lower domestic electricity costs make temporary site charging setups more viable for off-grid operations.
- Optimise fuel rebates for electric plant: Scrutinise the fuel mix if the company hires out electric mini-diggers or telehandlers. With domestic power becoming VAT-free, providing home-charging allowances or upgrading to smart-charging equipment for clients might offer a better overall ROI than providing traditional diesel equipment.
- Verify commercial VAT eligibility: Ensure your own business depots are correctly rated. Commercial electricity usually carries a 20% VAT rate, but qualifying low-usage properties can claim a reduced rate of 5%. Review your HMRC Business Energy VAT Guidance to ensure you aren't overpaying.
- Review client subsidies: Many hire companies offer 'fuel included' or power-inclusive add-ons. Recalculate your pricing models to reflect the VAT drop, which can protect profit margins on electrified tool hire and increase the appeal of low-carbon rental fleets.
- Leverage Green Incentive Schemes: Assess whether current power-hire investments align with governmental changes targeting household energy, such as clean heating and EV transition upgrades. Look into UK Business Finance Support to see if expanding your electrified hire catalogue opens up capital allowance benefits.

Checking out-of-contract rates

Energy tariffs should also be reviewed if you haven't done so recently and fixed rates are coming to an end.

Most hire sector businesses pay the 20% rate of VAT on business energy which is automatically added to bills by suppliers. If they can't claim it back as a business expense, they are paying an extra 20% each quarter and, if they're on their supplier's out-of-contract rates, could be overpaying by 33% or more compared to a fixed-rate contract.

Micro-businesses' lower rate

Some smaller hire businesses may also be eligible for a reduced 5% VAT rate. Those operating from home, and micro-businesses using very low amounts of energy may be eligible. If so, they must actively apply for it using a VAT declaration form when VAT on household electricity bills drops from 5% to 0% from October 1st.

Businesses can usually get the 5% rate if your business uses less than 1,000 kWh of electricity a month or 4,397 kWh of gas a month, subject to supplier checks.

'Not enough for businesses'

Business advocacy organisations have pointed out that a tax cut worth only £45 a year per household does not address the fundamental scale of inflation and energy costs. For businesses, high base energy costs and reliance on volatile fossil fuels remain significant concerns.

The Institute of Directors (IoD), which consistently advocates for deeper, structural reform of the UK's energy markets, has emphasised that rate cuts alone do not solve long-term price volatility or industrial competitiveness.

Other industry groups such as the End Fuel Poverty Coalition and business-focused think tanks including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) argue that true relief requires systemic changes.

They advocate for ending excess profits in the energy industry, severing the link between gas and electricity prices, and accelerating homegrown renewables to stabilise long-term energy markets. <<

HAE EHA Director of Public Affairs Mark Bradshaw is responsible for relations with the UK Government, other central agencies, as well as external and trade association partners. If you would like further information on any of the above, or other related topics, call 0121 380 4621 or email **mark.bradshaw@hae.org.uk**

Supporting business growth

Free training needs analysis can help ensure workforces are equipped with the skills businesses need today and ready for the challenges of tomorrow.

AS part of the CITB Specialist Upskilling Project, HAE EHA is offering members a free, impartial training needs analysis (TNA) designed to help them identify current skills gaps, plan for future development, and make informed decisions about training and funding opportunities.

Whether companies are looking to develop their entire workforce, strengthen a particular department, or support the progression of an individual employee, this personalised approach the analysis is tailored specifically to your business.

Flexible process

Because it's recognised that running a business leaves little spare time, the training needs analysis is designed to fit around their schedule. It can be completed over the phone, via an online meeting, by email, or through a combination of methods that best suits the member company and its staff.

There is no cost, no obligation, and no expectation to book any training afterwards. The purpose is simply to provide an independent assessment that gives companies' management teams a clear picture of their workforce's development needs.

All areas covered

The training needs analysis can cover all roles within an organisation, including:

- Branch and workshop managers (depot managers)
- Hire desk operatives (hire desk controllers)
- Plant and tool hire maintenance staff (fitters, test and run operatives, and mechanics)
- Yard operatives
- Drivers transporting construction materials and equipment
- HSQE (health, safety, quality and environment) personnel
- Logistics teams
- Mental health, neurodiversity and wellbeing across the workforce

By taking a holistic view of each business, HAE EHA can help to ensure every role has the right development opportunities to support both individual performance and business success.

Insights and actions

Following the analysis, the HAE EHA team will work with companies to create a practical training and development plan that prioritises their business needs.

Recommendations are grouped into manageable timescales:

- Immediate priorities (0 to three months), addressing urgent compliance, safety or operational needs.

- Medium term priorities (three to six months), developing skills to improve performance and productivity.
- Long term priorities (six to 12 months), supporting succession planning, future growth and workforce capability.

This provides a clear roadmap for employee development and helps companies to plan training investment effectively.

Funding guidance

Knowing what training is needed is only part of the picture. HAE EHA can also provide guidance on funding opportunities that may be available to support business plans, including:

- CITB grants and funding
- Apprenticeship funding
- Local authority funding schemes
- Other relevant training support available to your business

The ultimate aim is to help hire businesses maximise the support available while creating a sustainable development plan for your workforce. <<

Why book a training needs analysis?

A training needs analysis can help you:

- Identify current and future skills gaps.
- Support workforce planning and succession.
- Improve employee development and retention.
- Prioritise training based on business needs.
- Create a structured development plan.
- Understand the funding available to support training investment.

Every training needs analysis is completely personalised, impartial and focused on your business objectives.

To book a free training needs analysis, find out more about how it could benefit your business, or if you have any questions, you can contact the HAE EHA training and development team by calling 0121 380 4617 or emailing **training@hae.org.uk.**

Nikki Wyllie is responsible for learning and development within the association, supporting members to identify training needs and plan any development required for employees. Nikki also coordinates the association's NVQ Assessment Centre and CITB Approved Training Organisation.
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Powering the future

Report finds different emerging battery technologies will accelerate electrification of off-highway machinery used in hire sector.

MULTIPLE emerging battery technologies will play a role in the future off-highway machine market, a new report has highlighted.

Off-highway machines across construction, agriculture, and mining are in the midst of a major push towards electrification, driven by the financial, operational, and environmental benefits they can provide. However, different machines vary widely in their size, runtime, duty cycle demands, and more, requiring diverse battery options to meet the needs of every machine.

While the battery technologies of today serve the off-highway market well, IDTechEx's newly-updated 'Batteries for Construction, Agriculture, & Mining Machines 2026-2036: Technologies, Players, Forecasts' report highlights the role that emerging battery technologies will play in this evolving landscape.

The report highlights the performance characteristics of LTO, silicon anodes, solid-state batteries, and Na-ion which lend themselves to off-highway use.

The early days of off-highway electrification, especially in construction, saw the use of lead-acid batteries in smaller compact machines. However, with the maturity of the global EV market and of battery technologies, machines now universally use Li-ion battery packs. Specifically, they mirror the automotive market by using both NMC and LFP packs.

These technologies provide a good balance between energy density, cycle life, charging speed, and cost to allow for broad application across many machine types. Critically, because of their use in the automotive market, they have existing supply chain infrastructure that can be leveraged to allow OEMs easier access to packs for machine development and manufacturing.

NMC and LFP technologies have served the off-highway market well and will continue to moving forward, especially as their development continues and as prices keep dropping. However, certain machines will require more from their batteries than conventional Li-ion designs can provide, such as requiring longer cycle life, greater energy density, or faster charging capabilities, IDTechEx's research reveals.

In these scenarios, OEMs may have to turn to emerging battery technologies to fill the performance gap, the report states, citing LTO anodes, silicon anodes, solid-state batteries, and Na-ion as key technology options for future machines.

LTO anodes

LTO anodes make use of a lithium-titanate-oxide active material which can be used in place of a typical graphite anode, often paired with an NMC cathode. The resulting cell has an energy density three to five times lower than that of a graphite anode cell, but critically the anode undergoes very small volume changes during cycling, leading to excellent cycle life of 20,000 to 60,000 cycles. It additionally allows for very fast charging at rates of 6-10C.

This unique combination of performance parameters makes LTO anodes very well-suited to use in mining machines. These machines often need to operate 24/7 for many years at a time, requiring both extended cycle life and fast charging to minimise downtime. Additionally, larger machines such as those in mining are more tolerant to lower energy densities and can accommodate the shortcomings of LTO anodes.

LTO technology is now becoming increasingly commercialised in mining. While the high lithium content of the anode leads to much higher costs, this can still be more economical than requiring multiple replacements of NMC or LFP packs over a machine's lifetime.

Silicon anodes and solid-state batteries

Silicon anodes and solid-state batteries are both technologies that have seen extensive development and investigation for future use in the automotive market. Silicon anodes make use of greater percentages of silicon (10% or more) in graphite anodes, while solid-state batteries involve replacing the liquid electrolyte in a typical Li-ion cell with a solid electrolyte.

Both these technologies can provide higher energy densities than typical cells, but they also face considerable cycle life limitations that restrict their use to only around 1000 cycles. As a result, applications in off-highway will mostly be centred around smaller machines (where density is paramount) with lower utilisation. This fits quite nicely with the operational profile of electric tractors in agriculture, which may work for less than 1000 hours in their lifetime, but which benefit from high density batteries in order to carry ploughs and tools over large areas of land.

Na-ion batteries

Na-ion batteries are emerging as a potentially lower cost alternative to Li-ion, using more abundant and lower cost material such as sodium and aluminium instead of lithium and copper respectively. Na-ion also offers LFP-like densities with the potential for enhanced power capabilities and cycle life – though these can vary

widely between cell designs. The result is a cell that can broadly provide for applications across construction, agriculture, and mining machines, and is thus expected to see considerable uptake in the coming decade.

60k sales during five-year switch

DATA revealed by portable power specialist Instagrid shows that there has been a clear shift towards advanced battery technology over the past five years as companies seek cleaner power solutions.

Diesel generators have long been the go-to choice for off-grid power in sectors including construction, events, TV and film production and utility services. However, prioritising cleaner, quieter, more cost-effective and safer solutions has led many companies to switch to portable battery power systems instead, with the rental market leading the way in reshaping off-grid energy use.

Instagrid's latest Impact Report shows a collective shift in how organisations access off-grid and rental power. The company has sold nearly 60,000 portable battery units globally over since 2021. An estimated 180,000 professionals are now working in healthier, quieter conditions as a result.

Co-founder and Co-CEO of Instagrid, Andreas Sedlmayr, said: "This change is positive both for our customers' wellbeing and the environment," adding: "It is driving an evolution in thinking and adoption across many markets and industries, with a growing number of clearly-defined benefits delivering demonstrable impact.

One example is Kiloutou, a major European rental equipment business which, by introducing Instagrid's portable power supply to its product portfolio, enabled its customers to avoid approximately 700 tonnes of CO_2e in 2025. <<

NEW TO THE CREW ...

We introduce the latest recruits to HAE EHA membership and invite you to join us in giving them a warm welcome.

ELEVEN new members have joined HAE EHA in recent weeks from a range of different sectors and geographical areas, expanding its growing membership.

- **LBRE** (Load Bank Rentals Europe) provides temporary load bank rentals to test and validate heavy-duty power systems. The company's primary focus is the data centre industry. Its equipment is used to test backup generators, uninterrupted power supplies (UPS), and cooling units. This prevents system failures when live power demands are placed on the grid. A relatively new company, having formed last year, the company is based in Biebesheim am Rhein, Germany, with a central head office and primary operations located in the Frankfurt region.

- **SHOWPLACE LTD** designs and builds temporary structures, mobile trailers, and exhibition stands for events and businesses across the UK and Europe. Headquartered near Stratford-upon-Avon, the company provides full project management, custom branding, and logistics for trade shows, roadshows, and temporary workspace needs. It was formed in 1987.

- **EXCEL POWER LIMITED** (trading as Hampshire Generators) was formed in 2012. The company is based at Exton in Hampshire and operates as a standby power specialist, supplying and maintaining systems globally. It designs, manufactures, and supplies power generation equipment, including generators (ranging from 1kW portable petrol inverters to 3,300kVA industrial diesel generators), solar panels, automatic transfer switches (ATS), uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) to manage backup power, petrol-driven water pumps and pressure washers.

- **CITY TOOL HIRE LTD** (trading as City Hire) is a UK-based rental company. It supplies heavy plant, construction machinery, and power tools to trade workers and building sites and operates across London, the South East, the West Midlands, and the North West. The company hires out a variety of equipment including mini excavators, access towers, and site lighting. The original business was founded in 1989 and its current entity was officially incorporated in 2011.

- **REDEXIM UK** designs and supplies heavy-duty machinery for maintaining natural and synthetic sports surfaces. Its equipment is used by groundsmen, golf course greenkeepers, and landscapers to aerate soil, spread seed, and clear debris. Its tools keep grass healthy and playing surfaces safe. The company is based in Haslemere, Surrey, and is famous for inventing the Verti-Drain, a machine that pushes long metal spikes into the ground to loosen hard, compacted soil, in 1980. Redexim UK was originally formed as Charterhouse Turf Machinery in 1982 and was the UK distributor for Redexim's machinery. In 1997, it became a wholly-owned subsidiary and in 2021 rebranded to Redexim UK

- **NORTH WEST ACCESS & SALES LTD** rents, sells, and services equipment used to work at height. Located in Aintree, Liverpool, it supplies items like scissor lifts, scaffolding towers, and ladders to the construction and engineering industries across North West England. Formed in 2013, It also provides personal protective equipment (PPE), site equipment alongside specific safety training on PASMA (scaffolding) and IPAF (work platform).

- **SPARTAN SOLUTIONS LTD** builds mobile software and intelligent asset management tools for equipment operators. Its software digitises field operations like deliveries, equipment inspections, and maintenance which helps companies in the industrial and equipment rental sectors remove paperwork, track machinery, and improve worker productivity. The company was formed in 2003.

- **J KEANE PLANT HIRE** is a family-run construction business based in Truro, Cornwall. The company rents heavy-duty construction machines like diggers and dumpers with or without trained drivers. It also performs groundworks such as site digging, clearing, and drainage and delivers building materials such as sand and gravel. It was originally founded in 2016 and became a limited company three years later.

- **CATERPILLAR UK** ltd designs and manufactures heavy equipment, engines, and parts used for construction, mining, and agriculture. Operating as a major branch of the global company, its facilities build machines like backhoe loaders and articulated hauling trucks. The company also provides repair services, equipment financing, and parts distribution. Caterpillar UK was formed in 1950 and was Caterpillar's very first overseas subsidiary.

- **DEREHAM HIRE AND SALES** rents, sells, and repairs tools and machinery for builders and gardeners. Located in Norfolk, they supply heavy equipment like diggers, along with small power tools, heaters, and gas bottles. The company also services broken machines and sharpens blades for both trade professionals and those carrying out DIY tasks. It was formed in 2008.

- **FALCON PLANT LTD** is an independent plant hire company based in Keynsham, South West England. The company rents construction and civil engineering machinery like excavators, dumpers, telehandlers, and fuel bowsers to contractors. It is also a major UK dealer for XCMG equipment. Founder Aaron Walsh created the company in 2019.

If you're new to HAE EHA and would like to highlight your services, tell us about your company and include a logo and contact details, please contact ***advertising@hae.org.uk***

New rules tighten tracking for cross-border hirers

Is your hire fleet ready for the new Irish border tracking enforcement? Our SafeHire team outlines the new ruling and how to ensure compliancy.

EQUIPMENT hire companies operating commercial vehicles between 2.5 and 3.5 tonnes across the Irish border face a strict tracking crackdown following new enforcement guidelines from the DVSA and DVA.

Mandatory, certified Smart Tachograph 2 installations are now required, with non-compliance triggering potential prosecution, heavy fines, or total bans on cross-border transport.

The Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency's 'Approved tachograph centre special notice 02-26' guidance was officially published on May 26th 2026 and includes the following:

1. Zero emission vehicles weighing 3.5 tonnes to 4.25 tonnes - The Goods Vehicles (Testing, Drivers' Hours and Tachographs etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 have now been laid and came into force on June 1st. These amendments make changes to the rules for zero emission vehicles with a gross weight between 3,501kg and 4,250kg.

Tachograph rules do not apply to zero emission goods vehicles (such as electric vans or trucks) when they are used to carry goods for a business and their total permitted weight, including any trailer, is more than 3.5 tonnes but no more than 4.25 tonnes.

2. New DVSA and DVLA rules extend tachograph requirements to smaller vehicles like vans and light commercial vehicles - If your vehicle crosses an international border for commercial purposes, you must comply.

The core changes

There are three main changes now in effect. These are as follows:

- Weight threshold: Vehicles with a Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM) between 2.5 and 3.5 tonnes used internationally for hire and reward require a Smart Tachograph 2 (also called Gen 2, Version 2).
- Driving rules: Drivers of these in-scope vehicles must follow standard EU drivers' hours and rest rules (maximum nine-hour daily driving limit, mandatory 45-minute break after 4.5 hours).
- Border crossings: Smart Tachograph 2 devices automatically log border crossings, but drivers must still enter their country code manually at the start and end of shifts.

Who is affected?

The new legislation affects UK operators driving LGVs over 2.5 tonnes carrying goods for payment into or through the EU.

It does not apply to domestic-only operations within the UK. If your van never leaves Great Britain or Northern Ireland, no tachograph is needed.

Those transporting their own goods (not for hire or reward) where driving is not the main activity, are exempt from the new rulings.

What you need to do

- Equip the Vehicle: Ensure your van has an approved Smart Tachograph 2 installed.
- Obtain driver cards: Apply for a valid digital tachograph driver card from the DVSA.
- Download data: You must legally download a driver card data every 28 days and vehicle unit data every 90 days, keeping records secure for 12 months.

Any HAE EHA members wanting to review the full Approved tachograph centre special notice can do so at **https://bit.ly/4vXr1a1** or can read about the extension on the BVRLA website at **www.bvrla.co.uk**. <<

The SafeHire Certification Scheme is a private standard created by and written for the hire industry with the help and guidance of British Standards Institute (BSi) with support from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). For further details about SafeHire, SSIP and how to get your organisation audited for certification, contact the team on **0121 380 4602**, or **safehire@hae.org.uk.**

Health and safety breaches

In this regular feature, we detail the latest court cases and sentences resulting from HSE investigations, highlighting the significant outcomes that result from lack of compliance and adequate care while carrying out work on construction sites, within factory or workplace environments, using plant machinery, working at height and other areas commonly associated with hire services.

Scaffold tower assembly and inspection inadequate

TWO members of the public suffered serious injuries when a scaffold tower toppled onto Putney high street.

HSE found the tower had been assembled incorrectly and covered with sheeting which acted 'as a sail' in windy conditions.

In July 2023, operatives assembled the mobile tower scaffold while supervised by a company director. The tower, which had been assembled incorrectly with inadequate measures to separate it from members of the public, was subsequently covered in sheeting.

The sheeting acted as a sail in windy conditions, causing the tower scaffold to overturn, striking and trapping two members of the public, resulting in serious injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had failed to ensure the temporary structure was designed, installed and maintained so that it could withstand foreseeable loads, including those created by wind acting on the sheeting. The company had previously been served with a Prohibition Notice in relation to unsafe work involving a tower scaffold at another site.

The tower scaffold had neither been assembled nor inspected by adequately trained and competent persons, the inquiry found, and had not been erected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or established industry guidance.

Tower scaffolds must be erected by trained and competent persons and in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. Duty-holders must also ensure temporary structures are stable and capable of withstanding foreseeable environmental conditions, including wind loading.

The company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £7,000 in costs and the director was found guilty of an offence under Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, fined £1,730 and ordered to pay £1,730 in costs.

HSE Inspector Daniel Burton said: "The public have a right to expect scaffolding they pass by is safe and has been properly installed – yet every year people are injured when scaffold towers overturn."

Lack of awareness training and asbestos risk

A WASTE and recycling company has been fined £36,000 for repeatedly failing to provide appropriate welfare facilities and asbestos awareness training for employees at a site in North Wales.

Workers were tasked with sorting waste and recyclable materials by hand without having facilities to wash dry themselves afterwards. A routine inspection revealed that the company had failed to make warm running water and soap available to employees as well as a means to dry themselves. There had been at least one occasion where asbestos had been brought onto the site.

An HSE investigation found that the company had received previous enforcement on several occasions over an 11–year period. On each occasion, it had failed to maintain minimum health and safety standards.

HSE Inspector James Benton said: "The health risks from exposure to material containing asbestos is well known yet this company wasn't providing the appropriate facilities for workers to protect themselves. Basic welfare provision is essential to ensure that employees can clean themselves at work, to help prevent exposure to harmful microorganisms."

The company pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act, was fined £36,000 and ordered to pay £8,867 in costs.

"Basic welfare provision is essential to ensure that employees can clean themselves at work, to help prevent exposure to harmful microorganisms."

Inadequate assessment and risk management during cleanroom dismantling

A LACK of risk assessment and action which led to a series of wall panels collapsing and a worker being ejected from a scissor lift has resulted in the company responsible being given a hefty fine.

The worker had been carrying out a dismantling operation at a specialist technology centre in Renfrew in November 2022, working at a height of around 4m on a scissor lift. He was removing wall panels from a cleanroom at the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS), when the remaining panels fell and struck the platform. He was thrown from the lift onto the concrete floor of the warehouse and later found to have suffered a traumatic brain injury, rib fractures, lung contusions and fractures to his right thigh bone and left shin bone. He died in hospital the following day.

The cleanroom, which had been used to house a welding robot, was a steel-framed structure with walls and roof constructed of polyurethane panels measuring 6.1m in height. A company had been subcontracted to remove the panels as part of the wider dismantling operation.

An HSE investigation found that the company failed to adequately assess and manage the risks associated with dismantling a structure it had not originally installed.

The wall panels, once the roof had been removed, had insufficient lateral support to maintain their structural stability. Although the company's own method statement specified that 'A-frame' props or supports should be installed where necessary, no such props were present or in use on site at the time of the accident.

The company had carried out visual inspections of the exterior of the cleanroom prior to commencing work and proceeded on the assumption that it had been constructed to industry standard. The company also failed to communicate its risk assessment and method statement to the employees carrying out the work.

Falls while working at height remain the leading cause of workplace injury and death. New data published by HSE for 2025/26 revealed that 31 people died, representing around a quarter of all work-related deaths for the year.

The company, which pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act, was fined £50,000 with a victim surcharge of £3,750.

HSE inspector Amna Doherty said: "There was a lack of planning in terms of the risk and those being tasked with the job were not aware of the dangers posed to them."

Insecure board materials and lack of training

AN incident in which an apprentice joiner was fatally crushed by unsecured board materials at a renovation site in Bangor, has resulted in a property management company being fined and its director handed a suspended sentence.

The joiner apprentice was working at a residential property which was undergoing a full renovation in 2023 when a stack of wooden board material fell, fatally injuring her.

She had been working alone at the time of the incident and was found deceased at the property after she failed to respond to messages or return home. A mixture of board materials had been stacked vertically and unsecured against a wall. It is believed she may have been attempting to retrieve a plywood board from the stack when some of the boards fell on her, crushing her neck and causing fatal injuries. There were 28 boards in total, of large dimensions and potentially weighing up to 30kg each. No attempt had been made to secure the boards in their upright position, and the risk of them falling had not been identified.

An HSE investigation found her employer had failed to provide safe systems of work and adequate information, instruction, training and supervision. The investigation also found that these failures were attributable to the neglect of a company director.

Investigators found there was inadequate site supervision, no suitable lone working policy or procedure, no suitable policy or procedure for the storage of board materials, and inadequate risk assessment prior to the incident.

Building materials must be stored safely so they cannot topple or roll over. Boards should be stored horizontally on a level surface using suitable pallets or battens and must never be stacked on edge without adequate support. Where lone working is undertaken, there should be increased training, supervision and monitoring, including procedures to confirm a lone worker has returned safely once their task is complete.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching the HSE Act, was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £10,080 in costs while its director, who also pleaded guilty, was sentenced to 26 weeks' imprisonment suspended for two years and ordered to pay £7,886 in costs.

Inadequate health surveillance puts workers at risk

THE Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has issued its first ever Prohibition Notice against an occupational health service provider, following findings that inadequate health surveillance was putting workers at risk of serious and irreversible harm.

The action marks a significant milestone in HSE's regulation of occupational health provision.

HSE inspectors found that the provider was delivering health surveillance through personnel who were inadequately trained, unqualified, and unsupervised. The ineffective surveillance meant that early signs of serious occupational diseases — including occupational asthma, dermatitis, and noise-induced hearing loss — were at risk of going undetected, leaving workers exposed to wood dust and noise without appropriate intervention.

A Prohibition Notice was issued to stop activity and HSE subsequently issued an Improvement Notice. Inspectors identified a lack of competent occupational health oversight, inadequate clinical governance, no quality assurance processes, and no clear procedures for escalating adverse findings or reviewing workplace controls.

"Health surveillance exists to protect workers from work-related health conditions that can cause permanent, life-changing harm."

HSE Occupational Health Inspector Julie Wood said: "Health surveillance exists to protect workers from work-related health conditions that can cause permanent, life-changing harm. When it is carried out poorly, employers are given false assurance and workers are left unknowingly at risk.

"We expect occupational health providers to demonstrate genuine competence, proper clinical governance, and clear processes for acting on what they find. Anything less is a failure of the workers these services are meant to protect."

Health surveillance is a legal requirement for many employers and exists to identify occupational diseases early so that appropriate action can then be taken to protect the affected worker and their colleagues.

Tipper truck falls off ramp without physical barriers

A JOINT venture working on the HS2 rail project has been fined after the driver of a 20-tonne tipper truck was injured when his vehicle fell off the edge of an excavation ramp.

The incident happened in 2021, at a site in Copthall North near Uxbridge, West London. The site was being run by a venture set up by three major construction companies.

The tipper truck fell approximately 2m and landed on the driver's side. The man behind the wheel suffered a broken nose, cut hand, and a shoulder injury.

HSE inspectors who visited the site found there were no signs on the haulage routes being used, no edge protection in place to prevent vehicles going over the edge of the ramp, and excavations adjacent to some of the vehicle routes with unsupported, vertical faces which were at risk of collapse.

The incident occurred in an area where a 'cut and cover tunnel' was being built. These are shallow tunnels built on the surface before being buried, with trees, plants, and shrubs planted on top. Material from the excavation was to be reused, removing the need for it to be taken off site.

A contractor company had been tasked with transporting excavation material via 20-tonne tipper trucks to an area under the control of another joint venture and drivers had been operating at the site for about two weeks by the time the incident occurred.

The subsequent HSE investigation found that on the morning of the incident, the earthworks team changed their working area after it was deemed that the original material could not be used. This meant moving the excavator's loading position and creating a new traffic route – but the change inadvertently left an unprotected edge on the bank above.

When the first tipper truck driver used the higher-level bank instead of the intended new route, his vehicle slipped on the ramp. The next driver followed the same path – and his vehicle veered off the edge of the bank.

Physical barriers, such as safety banks, should be provided at the edges of excavations.

A fine of £400,000 was issued, along with an order to pay costs of £8,974.

HSE Inspector Gordon Carson said: "Its failure to properly plan and promptly communicate changes in vehicle routes created unsafe conditions for the drivers of tipper trucks. The consequences of this could have been even more serious than they were for the driver involved."

Working at height measures not implemented

A CONSTRUCTION company has been fined after a worker sustained life-changing injuries when he fell more than 2m while replacing steps at a residential property in Leamington Spa in 2024.

The worker fell through a gap in a balustrade into a basement lightwell approximately 2.6m below. The gap had been created the previous day when railings were removed to allow the old steps to be taken out.

An HSE investigation found that his employer failed to put in place suitable and sufficient measures to prevent a fall from height. The company did not produce a task-specific risk assessment or method statement for the work, and failed to ensure that scaffolding or other protective measures were in place before employees began replacing the steps at the property.

Employers must take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent falls when working at height. This includes properly planning the work, carrying out task-specific risk assessments, and putting in place physical safeguards such as scaffolding, guardrails or coverings to prevent falls.

HSE Inspector Zach Morris said: "Companies must ensure that all work at height is properly planned, risk-assessed and carried out using appropriate control measures to protect workers."

Workers still put at risk after excavation accident

AN incident involving an excavation wall falling onto a worker has resulted in a suspended jail sentence and fine for a construction company director.

The director failed to report the incident to Britain's workplace regulator, as required under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2012.

The worker had been levelling the ground in a 3m deep excavation area. It had been raining and the excavated soil and other material was piled up by the side of the excavation. The excavation wall fell towards him, leaving him pinned against the wall.

The director and another person moved the operative to a works van and took him to hospital and the injured worker's solicitor reported the incident to HSE two months later.

HSE inspectors made several visits to the construction site and found that the work being undertaken at the time of the incident had since failed to be suitably planned, managed and monitored. Multiple enforcement notices were issued.

Contractors are required to plan, manage and monitor the construction work under their control so it is carried out in a way that controls the risks.

The director pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act, was sentenced to six months' jail suspended for two years and ordered to pay £4,608.32 costs and a £154 surcharge.

HSE inspector Andrew Pipe said the director's decision to not report the incident, as required by law, resulted in other workers continuing to be put at risk and it was lucky that no one else was seriously injured.

"This case should remind everyone in the construction industry that HSE will not hesitate to take action against individuals and companies that fail to properly plan and manage serious risks on construction sites," he said.

'Company's good H&S standards fell short at time of scaffolding fall'

A LACK of legally-required weekly scaffolding inspections and adequate preventions could have helped prevent a labourer falling to his death, a court has heard.

The labourer had been working for the principal contractor on a project to redevelop a former department store in New Malden into a mixture of commercial and residential units in July 2022.

He fell from an external scaffolding platform through an unglazed window void, landing on an internal concrete ground floor more than 3m below. He died in hospital from his injuries several days later.

An HSE investigation found that in one wall, window voids had been created to install glazed 'Juliet' doors. However, when the doors were delivered it was found some had damaged glazing panels so were not installed. Although the company recognised that the four unglazed window voids created a risk to workers on the scaffolding platform – falling from height through the voids – it was only in the hours after the labourer fell that protective boarding was installed.

The HSE investigation identified it was reasonably practicable for boarding or additional inside scaffolding guard rails to have been installed over the window voids to prevent falls from height as soon as they had been created.

The company, which pleaded guilty to contravening Construction (Design and Management) Regulations, was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay costs of £11,347.

HSE inspector Andrew Verrall-Withers said: "This is a case where a company who generally tried to have good standards of health and safety, failed to react effectively to an unusual situation and there were tragic consequences."

"A company who generally tried to have good standards of health and safety, failed to react effectively to an unusual situation and there were tragic consequences."

Risk assessment and guards fall short

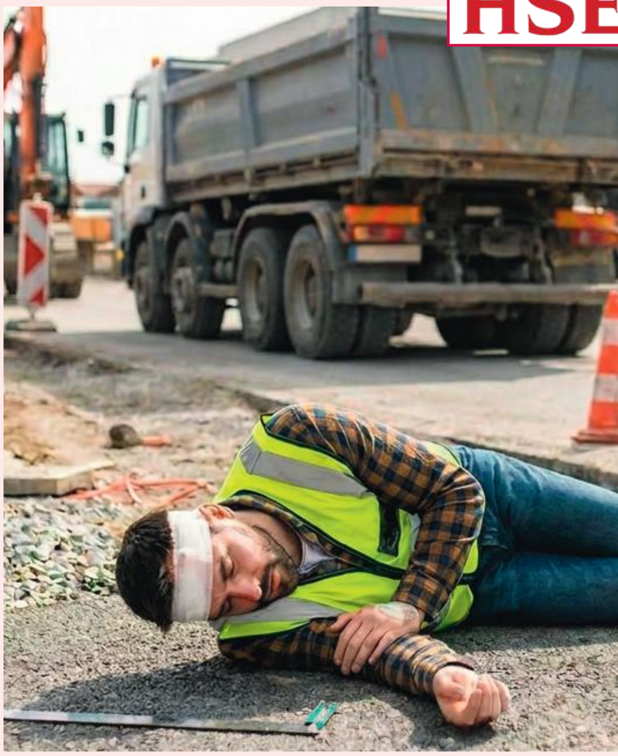
A COMPANY providing clinical waste management services has been fined after an 18-year-old employee sustained serious injuries while loading a bin conveyor.

The young man was working in Oldham in 2024 when his foot slipped into an unguarded conveyor channel. He sustained several serious fractures to his right leg.

HSE found that the company had failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and failed to provide suitable guarding on the bin conveyor such as fixed guarding, or other measures like interlocked guards or pressure mats to stop the movement of dangerous parts.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act, was fined £300,150, ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £2,000 and instructed to pay £3931.85 in costs.

HSE Inspector Sam Eves, said: "This incident could have so easily been avoided by properly assessing the risks."



'Very straightforward' measures could have prevented truck/pedestrian incident

LACK of guidance on vehicle manoeuvring and pedestrian guidance has resulted in a landscaping and civil engineering company being fined £125,000 after a man was struck by a reversing vehicle.

The worker suffered serious head injuries, damage to his eyesight, and significant mental and psychological trauma after a visiting flatbed truck reversed into him in Wolverhampton in 2017.

An HSE investigation found that the workplace had not been organised to allow pedestrians and vehicles to circulate safely. There were no clearly-demarcated pedestrian routes, no instructions for drivers on safe vehicle manoeuvring, and inadequate arrangements to ensure vehicles could reverse without risk to those on foot.

Nearly a quarter of all deaths involving workplace transport occur during reversing. Many other reversing accidents do not result in injury but cause costly damage to vehicles, equipment and premises.

HSE guidance on reversing advises to remove the need for reversing altogether by setting up one-way systems, for example drive-through loading and unloading positions. Where reversing is unavoidable, routes should be organised to minimise the need for reversing.

The company responsible for the Wolverhampton incident was also ordered to pay £150,000 in costs. HSE Principal Inspector Laura Royales said it failed to put in place "very straightforward" measures to separate vehicles and pedestrians.

No protection against cancer and hearing damage

A MANUFACTURE of skips and metal containers has been fined £30,000 after repeatedly failing to protect workers from carcinogenic welding fumes.

Despite being served with an Enforcement Notice by HSE inspectors on two occasions, it continued to carry out mild steel welding without adequate control measures to protect employees. Inspectors also found the company failed to meet its duty to monitor the health of workers exposed to high levels of noise, risking long-term harm.

During a visit to its site in 2024, HSE inspectors identified several issues including high-intensity welding without local exhaust ventilation (LEV), inadequate welfare facilities, and a lack of assessment of noise risk, along with other health and safety issues on site. Multiple improvement notices were served.

Inspectors returned on multiple occasions to assess compliance, but found that the company had done nothing to comply. The company also failed to provide health surveillance to monitor the hearing of employees exposed to high levels of noise.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer advises that exposure to mild steel welding fumes can cause lung cancer and possibly kidney cancer in humans. To control the risk, suitable ventilation must be present. Where this ventilation does not adequately control exposure, respiratory protective equipment (RPE) should be provided. Welding should not be undertaken without these control measures in place. This is applicable to welding indoors and outdoors.

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations require employers to provide employees with health surveillance involving hearing checks where they are regularly exposed to high levels of noise or where employees are particularly at risk e.g. pre-existing hearing loss or sensitivity to noise. Health surveillance helps employers to identify early signs of hearing damage, prevent further deterioration by prompting action, and making sure that their noise controls measures are working effectively.

The company was found guilty of failing to comply with two Improvement Notices, fined £30,000 and ordered to pay £4,571 in costs along with a victim surcharge of £2,000.

Two firms fined after worker fractures neck during platform collapse

Two construction companies have been fined after a drilling operative sustained fractures to his neck and back when a temporary platform loaded with concrete debris collapsed on top of him.

The operative was working for contractors at a refurbishment project in London which involved cutting openings through five concrete floors to create a service riser shaft. Carpenters had been instructed to build temporary wooden platforms under each opening to collect the 16kg concrete cores and debris generated by the cutting.

While he was cutting an opening on the third floor, working directly under one of the temporary platforms, it gave way and collapsed on top of the operative, along with chunks of concrete that had not been cleared away.

HSE found that there was no design for the temporary platforms and no calculation had been made for the safe level of loading.

While an inspection form for the platform was completed, it failed to identify any issues with the design, and the person tasked to complete it was a not a competent temporary works coordinator. Although there had been a verbal instruction for workers to regularly clear the platforms of concrete and not 'overload' them, no safe level of loading was known, and there was no monitoring of whether the platforms were cleared.

Both companies pleaded guilty to breaching The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations. One was fined £19,333 and ordered to pay costs of £5,548 while the other was fined £13,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,548.

HSE inspector Lucy Ellison-Dunn said: "People rightly expect that when they go to work, they are not put in unnecessary danger," adding that the incident was "entirely avoidable".

"Those providing temporary works have a duty to ensure that any temporary structure is properly designed and constructed to withstand any foreseeable load that might be imposed on it," she went on to say.

> **"People rightly expect that when they go to work, they are not put in unnecessary danger."**