LESSONS FROM ENFORCEMENT

2025 UK prosecutions where a missing or inadequate safe system of work was the underlying failure

A pattern worth noting: six of the seven were prosecuted under section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the general duty to provide a safe system of work for employees, which remains the standard route HSE uses when the investigation traces the incident back to a missing or inadequate safe system rather than a breach of a specific regulation. The Greenlife case is the odd one out procedurally (it was prosecuted for defying enforcement notices rather than under section 2(1) directly), but HSE's own findings still centre on 'no safe system of work' as the underlying failure.

Company	Incident and legislation breached	Fine / costs	Court and date	Link
East Riding Sacks Ltd	Night shift worker fell approximately 3 metres to his death while clearing a blockage on a sack-making machine; no robust safe system of work for isolation or blockage removal, and the fall from height risk was not identified. *HSWA 1974, s.2(1)*	£533,000 £6,066 costs	Hull Magistrates' Court, 30 April 2025	Open
Bestway Northern Ltd	Banksman fatally crushed between a reversing HGV and a wall during a store delivery; no safe system of work for vehicle movements, inadequate risk assessment and training. *HSWA 1974, s.2(1)*	£1,000,000 £11,950.07 costs	Manchester Magistrates' Court, 18 July 2025	Open
Tata Steel (UK) Ltd	Contractor fatally crushed by a moving beam after entering a conveyor system that was only partly isolated during maintenance work. *HSWA 1974, s.2(1) and s.3(1)*	£1,500,000 £26,318.67 costs	Swansea Crown Court, 31 July 2025	Open
Knowles Logistics Ltd	Employee suffered multiple injuries (broken ribs, punctured lung, liver damage) falling from a sugar beet conveyor while clearing a blockage by hand; no safe system of work for clearing blockages. *HSWA 1974, s.2(1)*	£133,000 £5,438 costs	Peterborough Magistrates' Court, 24 October 2025	Open
Reflex Flexible Packaging Ltd	Employee died of crush asphyxia after becoming trapped in an unguarded plastic conversion machine; no suitable risk assessment, no written safe systems of work or isolation procedures. *HSWA 1974, s.2(1)*	£277,500 £20,000 costs	Derby Crown Court, 5 November 2025	Open
Isoma Ltd	18 year old employee's arm became entangled in a rotating manual lathe while deburring by hand with emery cloth; no safe system of work or risk assessment for the task. *HSWA 1974, s.2(1)*	£16,000 £4,357.77 costs	Chesterfield Magistrates' Court, 20 November 2025	Open
Greenlife Property Developments Ltd	Workers found in an unsecured, unsupported 2.5 metre deep excavation with vertical sides; no risk assessment or safe system of work, and work continued in defiance of an HSE prohibition notice. *HSWA 1974, s.33(1)(c) and two counts of s.33(1)(g)*	£40,000 £5,812.57 costs	Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates' Court, 20 January 2025	Open

Note on sources

Fine, cost and legislation details are as reported in HSE's own press releases (press.hse.gov.uk), cross checked against trade press coverage where the HSE page itself could not be directly retrieved. This is not an exhaustive list of all 2025 safe system of work prosecutions; it reflects the cases identified and verified at the time this document was produced.