

Fatal 2 - Telehandler driver sentenced over death of a colleague

WHAT HAPPENED

A 49-year-old lift supervisor, James Connolly, was fatally injured after being struck and reversed over by a telehandler on a construction site as he walked from the welfare facilities back to his work area.

HSE found that the operator, a trained and experienced telehandler driver, chose to reverse the vehicle despite a dedicated turning area being available and was using a mobile phone whilst operating the machine, contrary to site rules.

The driver was subsequently sentenced to a 12-week suspended custodial sentence and fined £800.

KEY FINDINGS

- A turning circle had been provided to minimise reversing but was not used.
- The telehandler was reversed without the assistance of a traffic marshal.
- The operator was using a mobile phone whilst driving, contrary to site rules.
- Workplace transport remains one of the leading causes of workplace fatalities.

Latest HSE statistics show that 31 workers were killed in incidents involving moving vehicles during 2025/26.

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

HOW COULD THIS HAVE BEEN AVOIDED?

- Follow traffic management plans and avoid reversing wherever possible.
- Never use mobile phones or other distractions whilst operating plant or vehicles.
- Use traffic marshals as required and always follow site rules.
- Ensure vehicles are fitted with suitable visibility and warning aids and kept in good condition.
- Segregate pedestrians and vehicles using designated routes, barriers, lighting and signage.
- Wear high-visibility PPE, preferably long-sleeved tops and trousers.
- Take personal responsibility for your own safety and that of others.

KEY REVIEW POINTS:

- Are traffic management arrangements effective and being followed?
- Are reversing movements minimised and properly controlled?
- Are vehicle safety systems inspected and maintained?
- Are drivers complying with site rules, including mobile phone restrictions?
- Are managers and supervisors reinforcing standards and monitoring compliance?

SAFETY MESSAGE

Site rules are there to save lives.

Safe workplaces depend on individuals making the right decisions. Stay focused, avoid distractions, follow site rules, and challenge unsafe behaviours and conditions. Always look after yourself and each other.

For more details, refer to the HSE Press Release:: [Company fined after worker seriously injured in fall from height](#)

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LOCATION:	CONSTRUCTION/DELIVERY SITE	ALERT STATUS:	Normal
ACTIVITY:	PEDESTRIAN AND TRANSPORT SAFETY ON-SITE	DATE ISSUED:	07/09/2026 14:13:20
SUB ACTIVITY:	NO SUB ACTIVITY AVAILABLE	INCIDENT No:	04983