

THE BUILDING SAFETY GROUP NEWSLETTER



**Top 5 Health & Safety Management Problems
for Site Managers and How to Solve Them**

**Why Your Risk Assessments Might Be a
Ticking Time Bomb**

The Asbestos Standoff

**The Hidden Cost of Deadline Culture: Britain's
Construction MSD Problem**

BSG Membership Satisfaction Survey

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BLOG

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Top 5 Health and Safety Management Problems for Site Managers and How to Solve Them!

The UK construction sector continues to face significant health and safety challenges, with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) reporting over 25 fatal injuries and thousands of non-fatal incidents annually.

For site managers, maintaining compliance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 whilst protecting worker welfare represents an ongoing operational challenge.

Reactive approaches to health and safety management not only expose organisations to enforcement action and reputational damage but also fail to address the root causes of workplace incidents.

Here, BSG examines five critical health and safety management problems commonly encountered by UK site managers and provides practical, evidence-based solutions to address them effectively.

Problem 1: Inadequate Risk Assessment Documentation

Many construction sites operate with incomplete, generic, or outdated risk assessments that fail to meet the specific requirements of CDM Regulations 2015. Site managers frequently inherit template documents that bear little resemblance to actual site conditions, creating significant compliance gaps.

The consequences are substantial: HSE enforcement action, and most critically, increased likelihood of preventable accidents. The solution lies in implementing digital risk assessment systems that facilitate site-specific documentation with built-in review schedules.

These platforms enable real-time updates as site conditions evolve, ensure assessments remain current, and provide audit trails demonstrating regulatory compliance. Regular review cycles—ideally monthly or following significant changes—should be mandated within organisational procedures.



Problem 2: Poor Communication Across Multi-Trade Sites

Information breakdown between principal contractors, subcontractors, and site management teams creates dangerous operational gaps. When multiple trades work simultaneously without coordinated communication, conflicting activities emerge, near-misses increase, and regulatory breaches become inevitable. Site Managers report that communication failures contribute to a significant proportion of preventable incidents.

Effective solutions require multi-layered approaches: mandatory daily toolbox talks that address specific hazards and work sequencing; digital communication platforms providing real-time updates accessible to all site personnel; and clearly defined reporting hierarchies ensuring critical information reaches decision-makers promptly.

Establishing formal communication protocols within pre-construction phase plans ensures all parties understand their responsibilities before work commences.

Problem 3: Insufficient Worker Training and Competency Verification

The prevalence of expired Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards, inadequate task-specific training, and insufficient competency verification represents a persistent compliance challenge. CDM Regulations explicitly require that all site personnel possess appropriate skills, knowledge, and experience for their assigned tasks.

Site Managers often discover competency gaps only after workers have commenced activities, creating immediate safety and legal concerns. Implementing centralised competency tracking systems provides automated alerts for expiring certifications and training requirements.

Mandatory site induction processes must verify credentials before site access is granted, with digital systems maintaining comprehensive records. Regular competency audits should form part of routine site management activities, ensuring ongoing compliance and identifying training needs proactively.

Problem 4: Ineffective Incident Reporting and Investigation

Under-reporting of near-misses and superficial root cause analysis prevent organisations from learning from incidents and implementing preventative measures.

Many site workers fear repercussions from reporting, whilst time-pressured investigations focus on immediate causes rather than underlying systemic failures. Anonymous reporting systems encourage disclosure by removing fear of personal consequences, significantly increasing near-miss reporting rates.

Structured investigation protocols—such as the "5 Whys" methodology or fishbone diagrams—ensure thorough root cause analysis.

Establishing lessons-learned databases accessible across the organisation transforms individual incidents into collective learning opportunities, preventing recurrence across multiple sites.

Problem 5: Lack of Senior Stakeholder Engagement

When health and safety is perceived solely as a site-level responsibility, inadequate resources, poor safety culture, and limited accountability inevitably follow.

Senior stakeholder disengagement signals that safety is secondary to production targets, fundamentally undermining site managers' efforts. Research consistently demonstrates that visible leadership commitment represents the single most influential factor in establishing robust safety cultures.

Solutions require director-level ownership of health and safety outcomes, with board members conducting regular site visits and engaging directly with workforce concerns.

Integrating health and safety key performance indicators into business objectives—alongside financial and production metrics—ensures equal priority. Executive remuneration linked to safety performance further reinforces organisational commitment.



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BSG Comment

These five problems are fundamentally interconnected, with weaknesses in one area frequently exacerbating challenges in others.

Poor senior stakeholder engagement often leads to inadequate resources for training verification, whilst ineffective incident reporting prevents identification of risk assessment deficiencies.

Proactive health and safety management delivers tangible business benefits: reduced incidents, improved productivity, lower insurance premiums, and enhanced reputation.

Site managers should commence by **auditing current systems** against these five problems, prioritising interventions based on risk severity.

Implementation should follow a phased approach: addressing critical compliance gaps immediately, establishing foundational systems within three months, and embedding cultural changes over six to twelve months.

Ultimately, robust health and safety management represents not a cost burden but a fundamental business enabler in the competitive UK construction sector, protecting both workforce welfare and commercial viability.



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The Paper Trail That's Putting Your Business at Risk: Why Your Risk Assessments Might be a Ticking Time Bomb

Recent data from The Building Safety Group (BSG) highlights a systemic issue affecting the construction sector: Over 30% of documentation breaches identified during site inspections in the past six months relate to risk assessment non-compliance.

Combined with the Health and Safety Executive's prosecution figures for 2025/2026, a troubling pattern emerges across the UK construction sector.

Companies face substantial penalties not because safety documentation doesn't exist, but because it fails under scrutiny. Risk assessments languish in filing cabinets and digital folders, creating an illusion of compliance whilst sites operate in a parallel reality.

The gap between documentation and operational practice is creating legal and operational vulnerabilities that threaten the viability of construction businesses.

The Three Critical Failures

Outdated Documentation: Risk assessments frequently become obsolete the moment site conditions evolve. A document prepared during the tender phase may bear little resemblance to the hazards present three months into a project. Excavation depths change, temporary works alter traffic routes, and subcontractor activities introduce new risks. Yet the original risk assessment remains unchanged, creating a dangerous fiction that bears no relation to current site realities.

This temporal disconnect renders documentation worthless during HSE inspections and, more critically, fails to protect workers from evolving hazards.

Generic Template Syndrome: The construction industry's reliance on standardised templates has created a culture of copy-paste compliance. Risk assessments migrate from project to project with minimal adaptation, featuring identical hazard descriptions regardless of whether the site is a city-centre refurbishment or a greenfield development.

This approach produces documentation that satisfies superficial compliance requirements whilst failing to identify site-specific risks. Inspectors recognise generic assessments immediately, and their presence signals a fundamental failure in safety management systems.

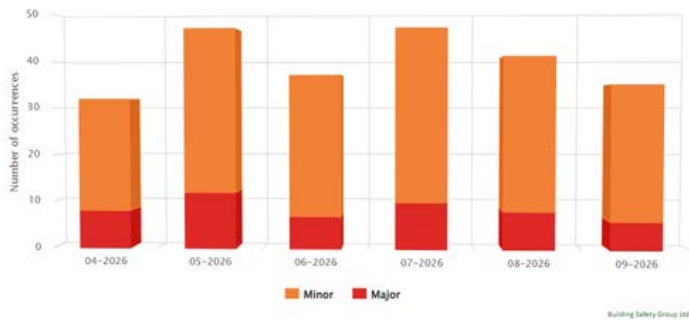
The Paper-Reality Divide: Perhaps most damaging is the complete disconnection between comprehensive documentation and daily site operations. Risk assessments exist as elaborate documents that workers cannot access, have never read, or don't understand. Site managers conduct toolbox talks without reference to formal assessments.

Method statements gather digital dust whilst operatives rely on experience and informal instruction. This divide transforms risk assessments from operational tools into liability documents—evidence of a paper exercise rather than genuine safety management.

The Real Cost of Non-Compliance: The financial implications extend far beyond immediate HSE penalties, though these alone can prove substantial. Prosecution costs, including legal fees and potential fines reaching six figures for serious breaches, represent only the visible expense. Enforcement notices halt operations, creating cascading delays that affect project programmes and contractual obligations.

Insurance premiums increase as underwriters recognise systemic documentation failures.

RAMS Non-compliances



Documentation breaches record over the last 6 month during BSG site inspections

Non Compliance Item	Breach %
RA/MS*	31.34
Statutory Inspections	13.25
Temporary Works Procedure	13
Scaffold Design	6.78
Actions from Previous Report	5.97
Scaffold TG20 Compliance Note	5.53
Signing in Records	3.52
Training	3.33
Statutory Notices	2.83
Emergency Procedure	2.7
First Aid	2.45
Tool Box Talks	2.26
Induction Records	2.01
Asbestos Survey	1.88
Construction Phase Plan	1.82
Permit to Work	1.07
Environmental Policy/Aspects &	0.25

*includes Fire Risk Assessments

Bridging the Documentation Gap:

Addressing these failures requires fundamental reform in how risk assessments integrate with site operations. Documentation must become a living process rather than a one-time exercise.

Establish protocols requiring formal review whenever site conditions change significantly—new phases, altered methodologies, or additional subcontractors should trigger assessment updates. Replace generic templates with site-specific analysis. Invest time in genuine hazard identification that reflects actual conditions, access arrangements, and workforce composition.

Engage site teams in the assessment process, capturing frontline knowledge that desk-based documentation misses.

Make risk assessments accessible and comprehensible. Digital solutions enable real-time access via mobile devices, ensuring operatives can reference relevant assessments before commencing tasks. Simplify language, incorporate visual aids, and structure documents for practical use rather than regulatory box-ticking.

Establish accountability frameworks linking documentation to site management. Supervisors should demonstrate how daily briefings reflect formal risk assessments.

Audit trails should evidence regular review and worker engagement. Senior management must recognise that risk assessment quality directly affects operational performance and legal exposure.

Sources:



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BSG Comment

Risk assessments must evolve from **compliance exercises** into operational tools that genuinely inform site safety management.

The current approach—creating elaborate documentation that exists separately from daily operations—represents a **ticking time bomb of legal and operational risk**.

Construction companies should immediately **audit current practices** against operational reality, identifying gaps between documentation and site conditions.

The systematic reform required demands investment in time, training, and potentially technology, but the alternative—continued exposure to prosecution, operational disruption, and preventable incidents—is untenable.

The time to defuse this bomb is now, before the next HSE inspection or, worse, the next preventable incident exposes the dangerous fiction of paper compliance.



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The Asbestos Standoff: Navigating Legacy Risks in the Net-Zero Era

The UK's ambitious net-zero targets have created an unexpected collision with a toxic legacy. Whilst asbestos was banned in 1999, approximately 500,000 public and commercial buildings across the nation still harbour this deadly material.

As the construction industry accelerates retrofitting programmes to meet 2050 carbon neutrality goals, workers are increasingly encountering concealed asbestos in ceiling tiles, ageing plaster, and insulation systems. This surge in disturbance incidents has exposed critical deficiencies in site surveying protocols and triggered a wave of legal disputes centering on negligent site mapping.

The Scale of the Problem

Asbestos remains ubiquitous in pre-2000 buildings, embedded in materials ranging from Artex ceiling coatings to pipe lagging and floor tiles. The current wave of energy efficiency upgrades—cavity wall insulation, loft conversions, and heating system replacements—necessitates intrusive work in precisely those building elements most likely to contain asbestos.

Recent Health and Safety Executive (HSE) data reveals a troubling trend: asbestos-related work stoppages have increased by 23% since 2020, correlating directly with the intensification of retrofit activity. Each discovery triggers immediate work cessation, specialist removal, and comprehensive re-surveying, with typical remediation costs ranging from £15,000 to £150,000 and project delays averaging six to twelve weeks.



Legal Obligations and Current Disputes

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 establishes unequivocal duties: building owners must maintain asbestos registers, whilst contractors must conduct adequate surveys before commencing intrusive work.

Refurbishment and demolition projects require Type 3 surveys—comprehensive destructive investigations designed to locate all asbestos-containing materials within the work area.

Despite these clear requirements, failures remain endemic. Common deficiencies include reliance on outdated management surveys, inadequate scope definition, and poor communication of survey findings to site operatives.

The HSE has intensified enforcement activity, with improvement notices issued to contractors increasing by 34% year-on-year, and recent prosecutions resulting in fines reaching £600,000 in cases involving worker exposure.

The liability chain is complex and contested. Whilst building owners hold primary duty to manage asbestos, contractors cannot simply rely on client-provided information.

This shared responsibility creates fertile ground for disputes, particularly where subcontractors suffer exposure due to inadequate information cascading.

Best Practice Framework

Effective asbestos risk management demands rigorous pre-project protocols. Construction companies must commission Type 3 surveys from UKAS-accredited consultants, ensuring survey scope precisely matches planned work extent. These intrusive surveys should be completed before tender pricing to enable accurate risk assessment.

Robust asbestos management plans must translate survey findings into operational controls, including detailed site mapping with clearly demarcated exclusion zones, permit-to-work systems for activities near identified asbestos, and contingency protocols for unexpected discoveries. All site personnel require asbestos awareness training as minimum standard.

Technology offers valuable risk mitigation tools. Digital asbestos registers with photographic records and GPS coordinates enable precise material location, whilst Building Information Modelling (BIM) integration allows three-dimensional visualisation of asbestos locations relative to planned work.



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BSG Comment

Asbestos remains the **critical risk factor** as the UK's retrofit acceleration intensifies. For construction companies, **proactive surveying** represents a business imperative extending beyond mere regulatory compliance—it is fundamental to protecting workers, managing liability exposure, and ensuring project viability.

Companies that embed rigorous asbestos management within their **operational DNA** will secure competitive advantage, whilst those treating surveying as a compliance checkbox face escalating legal and financial consequences.

For information about how to manage asbestos please view our documentation available on the [BSG Hub](#). We also run the following Asbestos training courses:

[IATP Asbestos Awareness](#)

[IATP Asbestos Awareness Online Training](#)

[IATP Non-Licensed Asbestos Work](#)

[Non-Licensed Asbestos Work
Groundworker Training](#)



The Hidden Cost of Deadline Culture: Britain's Construction MSD Problem

Construction workers in the UK face a musculoskeletal disorder rate approximately 70% higher than the national average—a statistic that translates into millions of lost working days annually and immeasurable human suffering.

These injuries, ranging from chronic back conditions to debilitating vibration syndrome, represent a crisis that is entirely preventable. Yet the industry continues to prioritise short-term deadline pressures over worker health, creating a false economy that undermines both commercial sustainability and workforce wellbeing. The question is no longer whether we can afford to address this crisis, but whether we can afford not to.

The Scale of the Problem

The UK construction sector leads all major industries in work-related musculoskeletal disorders, with severe back injuries, hand-arm vibration syndrome, and chronic joint strain dominating compensation claims. The financial burden extends far beyond direct medical costs: productivity losses from absent workers, spiralling insurance premiums, and the mounting expense of recruiting replacement staff in an already constrained labour market compound the problem.

Each MSD case represents not merely a statistical entry but a skilled worker potentially lost to the industry permanently. The cumulative effect creates a workforce crisis that threatens project delivery capacity across the sector, yet remains largely self-inflicted through inadequate preventative measures.

The Root Cause: Pressure Over Prevention

The fundamental driver of this epidemic lies in the relentless pressure to meet commercial deadlines, which systematically erodes safety protocols. Risk assessments have devolved into perfunctory exercises—generic templates copied across sites with minimal adaptation to specific hazards.

This "box-ticking" culture creates an illusion of compliance whilst actual working practices remain unchanged. Subcontractors, operating on razor-thin margins and facing contractual penalties for delays, prove particularly vulnerable to cutting corners on manual handling regulations.

The tragedy is that solutions exist and are readily available: ergonomic tools, mechanical lifting aids, and task rotation schedules can dramatically reduce MSD risk. Yet implementation remains sporadic at best.

Site managers, caught between safety obligations and programme demands, frequently opt for the path of least resistance—maintaining operational speed whilst relegating worker protection to paperwork compliance. This false economy trades immediate time savings for long-term workforce degradation, a calculation that fails both moral and commercial scrutiny.

The Business Case for Change

The true cost of musculoskeletal disorders extends far beyond immediate compensation claims. Insurance premiums rise with poor safety records, legal liability exposure increases, and staff turnover accelerates as experienced workers leave the industry or transfer to competitors with better safety cultures.

In a sector facing acute recruitment challenges, reputational damage from preventable injuries undermines talent attraction efforts.

Evidence consistently demonstrates that prevention costs substantially less than treatment and compensation. Ergonomic interventions, whilst requiring upfront investment, deliver measurable returns through reduced absenteeism, maintained productivity, and lower insurance costs.

Furthermore, regulatory enforcement is intensifying, with the Health and Safety Executive increasingly willing to prosecute companies demonstrating systematic failures in MSD prevention.

Critically, proper ergonomic practices need not compromise productivity. Mechanical aids often accelerate tasks whilst reducing injury risk, and well-designed task rotation maintains work quality whilst preventing repetitive strain. The perceived trade-off between safety and speed is largely illusory—sustainable productivity requires a sustainable workforce.



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BSG Comment

The construction industry stands at a crossroads. Continuing current practices guarantees escalating costs, workforce depletion, and regulatory intervention. Conversely, embracing **genuine prevention** offers competitive advantage through reduced overheads, enhanced reputation, and workforce stability. Industry leaders must recognise that protecting worker health represents sound commercial strategy, not regulatory burden.

The path forward requires moving beyond template compliance towards authentic, **site-specific risk management** that embeds ergonomic principles into operational planning.

Sustainable construction demands sustainable workforce practices—the sector's future depends upon making this transition now.



New BSG Members



We would like to thank the following new members who have joined BSG, since our last newsletter:

Kendrick Electrical Limited
All Install
Koddis Construction Ltd
Spiller Construction Ltd
DNDisturb Ltd
SM Engineering South West
GEOS Land & Structure Ltd
Hardwick Homes (Developments) Ltd
H2O Heating and Plumbing Ltd
Country Built
L Golledge Roofing
Helix Partnership Homes (Western) Ltd
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BSG Membership Satisfaction Survey 2026



The Building Safety Group (BSG) remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering exceptional service to our valued members.

Which is why our 2026 Membership Satisfaction Survey represents a crucial opportunity for you to share your experiences and expectations. Your insights are instrumental in shaping the future direction of our services and ensuring we continue meeting the evolving needs of the construction industry.

Survey Purpose and Importance

Your feedback directly informs our continuous improvement initiatives, enabling us to enhance the support we provide across the construction sector.

Member perspectives are not merely collected—they actively drive our strategic development and service refinement, ensuring BSG remains responsive to industry demands.

Survey Participation

We respectfully request just a few minutes of your time to complete this comprehensive survey. The questionnaire addresses critical areas including service quality, membership benefits, and the practical relevance of BSG to your business operations.

All responses are treated with strict confidentiality and will be carefully analysed to identify opportunities for enhancement and innovation in our member offerings.

Your opinions form the cornerstone of BSG's strategic direction and operational excellence. We sincerely appreciate your willingness to share your valuable time and insights with us.

Completing the survey

Please access the survey through the link provided below or visit our website at your earliest convenience. BSG remains dedicated to delivering responsive, member-focused services that genuinely support your business success. Thank you for your continued partnership.

**CLICK HERE TO
COMPLETE THE SURVEY**

**[BSG MEMBERSHIP
SATISFACTION SURVEY 2026](#)**



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COURT CASES

Two companies and an individual sentenced after worker crushed by two tonnes of soil in trench collapse

Two companies and a self-employed contracts manager have been sentenced after a worker was crushed to death when an unsupported trench collapsed at a site in Surrey.

Gheorghita Arsene, 33, who was known as Geo, was working at a site on Park Road, Banstead, Surrey on 24 June 2020. He had been working to replace a damaged pipe at the bottom of the deep trench, which had been dug with a three-tonne digger.

He had been clearing soil with a shovel and a pickaxe when, without warning, the trench walls collapsed. Although rescue attempts were made, he was buried in approximately 2 tonnes of soil and sadly died at the scene.



Police evidence photo

A joint investigation by Surrey Police and the Health and Safety Executive over five years found there were no supports in the trench and excavated soil had been deposited immediately next to it.

The investigation also found that, earlier that day, Anthony O'Connor a self-employed contracts manager working for T Vaughan Limited, had observed another worker in the same unsupported excavation earlier that day. Despite being aware of the measures required to prevent a trench collapse, he failed to ensure they were in place.

COURT CASES ctd ...

Earlier that day, O'Connor had observed another worker carrying out work in the same unsupported excavation. As an experienced contracts manager, he knew suitable measures were required to prevent a trench collapse but failed to ensure they were implemented.

Following a trial at the Old Bailey on 9 September 2026, principal contractor Appledorn Developments Limited and subcontractor T Vaughan Limited were convicted of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. T Vaughan Limited was fined £650,000 and ordered to pay costs of £40,000. Appledorn Developments Limited was fined £500,000.

Anthony O'Connor, a self-employed contracts manager working for T Vaughan Limited, pleaded guilty on 22 May 2026 to breaching Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 by failing to take reasonable care for the health and safety of others who may have been affected by his acts or omissions at work. He was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, and ordered to complete 150 hours of unpaid work.

A Health and Safety Executive spokesperson said:

"Gheorghita Arsene's death was as horrifying as it was preventable. He lost his life because basic precautions were not in place to protect workers from the well-known risks that come with excavation work.



Police evidence photo

Anthony O'Connor had observed workers in the trench without adequate protection and was aware of the measures required to prevent a collapse.

"This case is a stark reminder that when basic safety standards are ignored, the consequences can be fatal. Companies and individuals alike have legal duties to protect workers and where they fail to do so, and we will not hesitate to take enforcement action.

"Our thoughts today are with Mr Arsene's loved ones, as they mourn their loss."

Aggregates company fined after worker killed in conveyor crush

Gill Aggregates Limited, which operates a site in Dagenham, East London, has been fined £24,000 after one of its workers was drawn into machinery and suffered fatal crush injuries.

Manjit Kumar, 34, was working as a production operative for Gill Aggregates Limited at its East London Aggregate Depot in Halyard Street, Dagenham, on 24 June 2020, when the incident occurred. He was operating a bag flattening conveyor system forming part of a larger piece of machinery.

COURT CASES

ctd ...



The bag flattening conveyor system. Image: Courtesy of HSE

Mr Kumar was drawn into the compression conveyor through an opening in the guarding. His colleagues raised the alarm and stopped the machine, and the guarding had to be dismantled so that he could be retrieved. The crush injuries were so significant that he died in hospital a few days later.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company, which provides pre-packed and loose aggregates and haulage services to builders' merchants and the construction industry, had failed to prevent access to dangerous parts of the machinery. Although a fixed guard was fitted around the compression conveyors, it contained an opening measuring approximately 600mm wide by 335mm high, which allowed access to the dangerous moving parts.

Following the incident, further guarding was installed to prevent access to the compression conveyors.

The law requires that employers must take effective measures to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery, or stop their movement before any part of a person enters a danger zone. The measures include fixed enclosing guards and, where these are not practicable, other guards or protection devices. Hazards from machinery should be identified as part of the risk assessment, which should identify measures to reduce the risks those hazards present.

Gill Aggregates Ltd, of Botany Marsh, Lower Road, Northfleet, Kent, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

The company was fined £24,000 and ordered to pay a contribution towards costs of £43,000 at Snaresbrook Crown Court on 28 September 2026.

HSE Inspector Adepeju Sogadgi said:

“This was a tragic incident that resulted in Manjit losing his life.

“The risks associated with dangerous moving machinery are well known. Employers must ensure that effective measures are in place to prevent workers from gaining access to dangerous parts.

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Edward Parton, supported by paralegal Anushka Lulith.

Source: HSE



Training with BSG

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Asbestos Awareness

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- 16 December

CITB Site Supervisors Safety Scheme Training Refresher Scheme (SSSTS R) 1 Day

Classroom

- 29 October
- 19 November

Emergency First Aid At Work (1 Day)

Classroom

- 16 October
- 19 November
- 22 December

CITB Temporary Works Supervisor (1 Day)

Classroom

- 2 November
- 30 November

CITB Site Management Safety Training Scheme (SMSTS) 5 days

Classroom

- 12,13,14,15,16 October
- 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 November
- 30 November, 1, 2, 3, 4 December

CITB Temporary Works Co-ordinator (2 Days)

Classroom

- 3, 4 November
- 1, 2 December

CITB Site Management Safety Training Scheme Refresher (SMSTS R) 2 days

Classroom

- 25, 26 June
- 16, 17 July
- 27, 28 July

CITB Site Supervisors Safety Training Scheme (SSSTS) 2 Days

Classroom

- 19, 20 October
- 11, 12 November

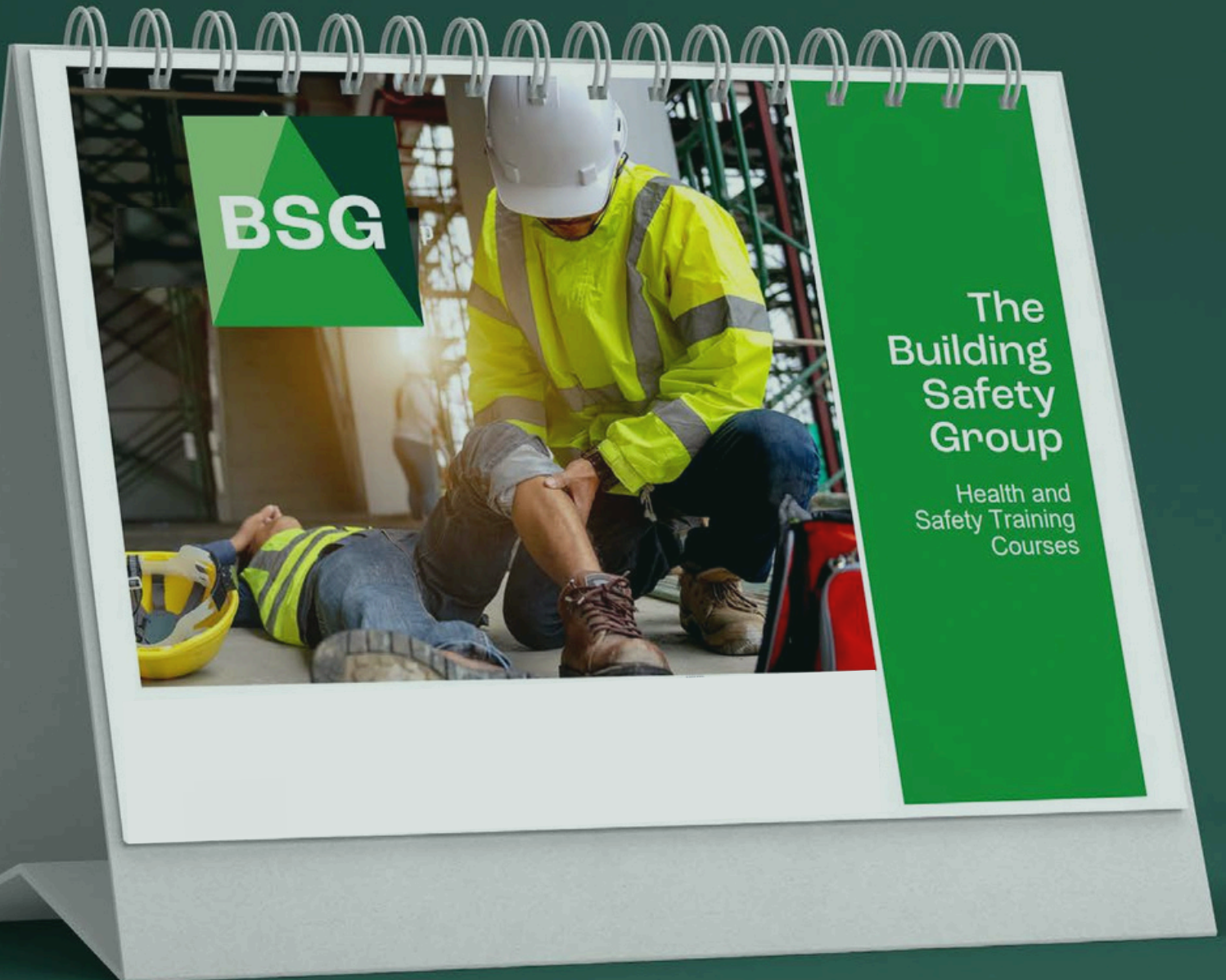


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