

---

# Tragic Incident at Recycling Facility Results in Fatality and Subsequent Fines for Two Companies

## Description

**On August 1, 2024, two companies faced significant fines following a tragic incident where a father of three lost his life after being crushed by a machine. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) determined that the incident was entirely preventable. Russell Hartley, an experienced engineer from Sheffield, would still be alive today if the work had been properly planned, managed, and monitored.**

Hartley, 48, had been hired by Premier Engineering Projects Ltd to replace machinery at a materials recycling facility located on Twelvetrees Crescent, Bow, London. He led a team of four engineers tasked with replacing a Trisomat screen, also known as a 'flip-flop', on February 24, 2020. The flip-flop is a machine designed to sort different sizes of waste and was positioned within a metal structure at the site.

Initially, a crane from M&M Mobile Crane Hire Ltd was used to lower the flip-flop from its elevated position. After this, Hartley took over with a telehandler. However, during the process, the flip-flop became jammed when Hartley attempted to reverse the telehandler. The crane was then employed once more to lift the flip-flop off the telehandler, which unbeknownst to the workers, had its forks slightly raised above ground level. As the crane moved, the flip-flop toppled off the forks and crushed Hartley. Another worker standing on the flip-flop at the time was thrown off but fortunately escaped serious injury.

The HSE investigation revealed that both Premier Engineering Projects Ltd and M&M Mobile Crane Hire Ltd had failed to ensure the safety of those involved in the replacement of the Trisomat screen. The work was neither properly planned nor supervised, and the risk assessment was deemed inadequate. Hartley was among ten engineers hired by Premier Engineering Projects Ltd and three workers from M&M Mobile Crane Hire Ltd present at the site.

In her victim statement, Hartley's wife, Debbie, expressed profound grief: "Russell was everything to us. He was funny and one of the nicest guys you could ever meet. Nothing was ever too much. If it needed doing, he got it done. He was a fantastic father and husband. He worshipped his grandkids and all his family. I feel like sometimes I am just waiting for him to come home. I can't accept that he has gone as I couldn't say goodbye. Nothing prepared me for that moment. I thought he would be here and live on forever. All he ever wanted was to keep his family happy and looked after, and I will try to keep that dream alive."

Premier Engineering Projects Ltd, based in South Yorkshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company was fined £28,000 and ordered to pay £9,277.48 in costs. Similarly, M&M Mobile Crane Hire Ltd from Slough also pleaded guilty to breaching the same section of the act, resulting in a £48,000 fine and £9,500 in costs.

HSE inspector Mark Slater emphasized the preventability of the incident, stating, "Had this work

been planned, managed, and monitored to a sufficient standard, this incident was entirely avoidable and Mr. Hartley's family would still have him in their lives. Risks arising from the lifting and moving of equipment of this size and nature are entirely foreseeable, and work of this nature should be afforded the utmost respect and care.

The prosecution was led by HSE enforcement lawyer Kate Harney, with support from HSE enforcement lawyer James Towey and HSE paralegal officer David Shore.

## CATEGORY

1. London

## POST TAG

1. Crush Injuries
2. David Shore (HSE)
3. Fines
4. Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
5. James Towey (HSE)
6. Kate Harney (HSE)
7. M&M Mobile Crane Hire
8. Premier Engineering Projects
9. Russell Hartley
10. Workplace Fatality

## Category

1. London

## Tags

1. Crush Injuries
2. David Shore (HSE)
3. Fines
4. Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
5. James Towey (HSE)
6. Kate Harney (HSE)
7. M&M Mobile Crane Hire
8. Premier Engineering Projects
9. Russell Hartley
10. Workplace Fatality

## Date

19/09/2024

## Date Created

06/08/2024