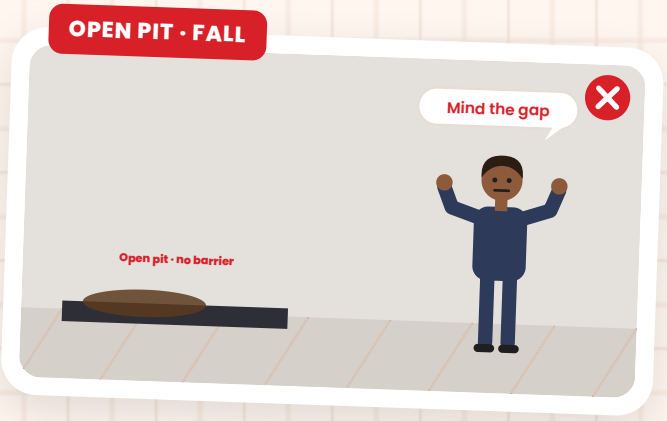
• UNLIMITED FINES · DIRECTORS LIABLE Service bays, MOT bay, body shop & tyre bay

Workshop Health & Safety Compliance Guidebook for Automotive Companies

Vehicle lifts, pits, isocyanate paints, risk assessments, machinery and accident reporting: what HSE inspectors check, **and why UK safety fines have no ceiling.**





Unlimited
fines under the Health and Safety at Work Act, set by turnover.

£188/hr
HSE's **Fee for Intervention** when it finds a breach.

2 years
maximum prison for individuals, including directors.

6 standards · 18 checkpoints · HSWA · LOLER · COSHH · PUWER · Right way / wrong way · Ideal fix time

2022 Car falls off lift → **2025** Garage fined £40K + costs → **2026** HSE charges £188/hr → **No ceiling on the fine.**

WHY THIS GUIDEBOOK EXISTS

In the UK, safety fines have no upper limit.

Since the 2016 sentencing guidelines, UK courts set health and safety fines by **company turnover and culpability**. There is no maximum. HSE also charges for its time, can stop work immediately, and prosecutes directors personally.

This guidebook covers the 6 standards that matter most in a dealership workshop.

WHERE THE HAZARDS ARE

Lifts
Falling vehicles
HSE-01

Pits
Falls
HSE-02

Body shop
Isocyanate asthma
HSE-03

Planning
Risk assessments, EV work
HSE-04

Machines
Grinders, tyres, compressors
HSE-05

Reporting
RIDDOR and accident book
HSE-06

WHO ENFORCES IT

HSE
Health and Safety Executive
Inspects workshops and prosecutes

Local authority
Environmental health
Covers some retail and office areas

Courts
Magistrates and Crown Court
Unlimited fines and prison

Insurers
Employers' liability
Premiums and claims after injuries

WHO IT'S FOR

Dealer principals & directors
Understand personal and company liability.

Workshop & body shop managers
Know the checks that prevent serious injury.

Auditors & H&S leads
Walk the workshop the way HSE does.

FINES SCALE WITH TURNOVER

A car fell. A mechanic may never work again.

In the Liverpool case, the lift arms weren't locked. The garage paid **£40,000 plus £20,000 costs**. For a large dealer group, the sentencing guidelines push fines far higher, because they're based on turnover.

THE PENALTY LADDER

LEVEL 1
£188 / hour
HSE Fee for Intervention for a material breach.

LEVEL 2
Notice
Improvement or prohibition notice: work stops.

LEVEL 3
Unlimited
Fine set by turnover and culpability.

LEVEL 4
2 years
Prison for individuals, including directors.

REAL CASES FROM US AUTOMOTIVE BUSINESSES

WHO	RESULT	WHAT HAPPENED
Car Spa & Tyres, Liverpool HSE · 2025	**£60,000** fine + costs	Car fell from a two-post lift, arms not locked. Mechanic crushed.
GP Motor Works, Isle of Wight HSE	**£20,000** fine + costs	Mechanic fell into an unguarded inspection pit.
Every material breach HSE	**£188/hr** Fee for Intervention	Charged for inspection, letters and follow-up.

SMALL GARAGE
£60K
Fine plus costs after a lift collapse.

LARGE GROUP
£M+
Sentencing guidelines scale with turnover.

AND THEN
Claims
Employers' liability claims **and higher premiums**.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

One page per standard. Make it safe first.

1. **Header**: code, area, owner and the maximum penalty
2. **The law**: which regulator and which regulation
3. **The cost**: fine, what else can happen and a real case
4. **Right / wrong**: illustrated pass and fail, plus how to audit

THE 6 STANDARDS

HSE-01	Vehicle Lifts Examined & Used Safely ⛓ PRISON	LOLER reg.9	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	Immediate	5
HSE-02	Inspection Pits Guarded ⛓ PRISON	WHSWR 1992	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	24 hours	6
HSE-03	Isocyanate Paints Controlled (COSHH) ⛓ PRISON	COSHH reg.7	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	Immediate	7
HSE-04	Written Risk Assessments ⛓ PRISON	MHSW reg.3	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	7 days	8
HSE-05	Tyre, Grinder & Air Equipment Safe ⛓ PRISON	PUWER reg.11	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	24 hours	9
HSE-06	Accidents Reported (RIDDOR)	RIDDOR 2013	SEVERE	Unlimited	7 days	10

IDEAL FIX TIME · COUNTED FROM AUDIT SUBMISSION

Immediate	Stop now · serious harm or clear breach	2 standards
24 hours	Fix within 1 working day	2 standards
7 days	Fix within 1 week · records, notices, training	2 standards

SCORING EACH CHECKPOINT

PASS
Every criterion met at the time of audit, with evidence captured.

FAIL
Any criterion not met at the time of audit. Record what you saw and who owns the fix.

N/A
Only where "Applies when" rules it out. Record why.

Note. HSE's sentencing guidelines put large organisations (turnover over £50M) in the highest bands. Fines are set by culpability and harm.

HSE-01 HEALTH & SAFETY · HSE · STANDARD 01 OF 06

Vehicle Lifts Examined & Used Safely

Area **Service bays · MOT bay** | Person in charge **Service Manager · Workshop Controller**

Regulator **HSE**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · set by turnover and culpability

Individuals: up to **2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL | ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

HSWA

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 · Management of H&S at Work Regs 1999 · **LOLER 1998** reg.9 thorough examination (at least every 12 months, or as set by an examination scheme) · **PUWER 1998**

WHAT WE CHECK

Every vehicle lift has a current thorough examination by a competent person (at least every 12 months, or more often if the examination scheme says so), defects are fixed, and only trained staff use it, locking arms and using the right lift points.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Does every lift have a thorough examination report within the required interval (12 months, or per the examination scheme)?
- Q2 Are defects from the report fixed and signed off?
- Q3 Are users trained, and do they lock the arms before going under?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

Fines are **unlimited**. Courts use the sentencing guidelines: the bigger the company and the worse the failure, the higher the fine, and it can reach millions for large groups.

BEYOND THE FINE

HSE charges **£188 an hour** (Fee for Intervention) for its time when it finds a material breach. It can issue **prohibition notices** that stop work immediately. Directors can be prosecuted personally.

REAL ENFORCEMENT

£60K

fine and costs for a Liverpool garage after a car fell off a two-post lift whose **arms weren't locked**, crushing a mechanic (sentenced 2025).

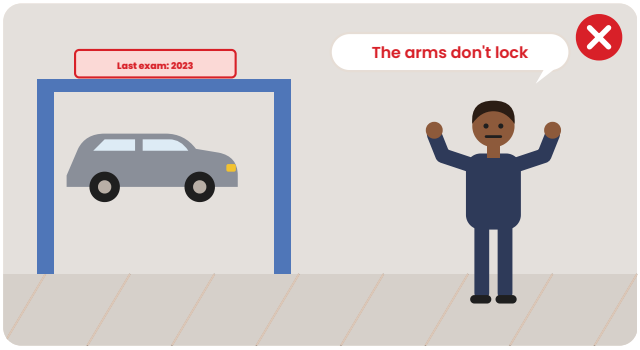
✔ RIGHT WAY



Current LOLER report and arms locked.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED + PRISON



Report from 2023, arms not locking.

PURPOSE

A falling car kills. In the Liverpool case the arms weren't locked and the mechanic will probably never work again.

FIX IT WITHIN

◷ Immediate

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- Thorough examination in date
- Defects closed
- Users trained
- Arms locked every time

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Check reports for every lift
2. Watch a vehicle being raised
3. Check training records

Evidence: LOLER reports + training log.

WORST CASE A lift collapse brings an **unlimited fine**, HSE's hourly charges, and possible **prosecution of directors**.

HSE-02 HEALTH & SAFETY · HSE · STANDARD 02 OF 06

Inspection Pits Guarded

Area **Service bays** | Person in charge **Workshop Controller** | Regulator **HSE**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · set by turnover and culpability

Individuals: up to **2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL | ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

HSWA

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 · Management of H&S at Work Regs 1999 · **Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992** reg.13 falls · HSWA s.2

WHAT WE CHECK

Inspection pits are covered, fenced or otherwise protected when not in use, edges are marked, and there's safe access in and out.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Are pits covered or barriered whenever a vehicle isn't over them?
- Q2 Are pit edges clearly marked?
- Q3 Is there safe access (steps) and good lighting?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

Fines are **unlimited**. Courts use the sentencing guidelines: the bigger the company and the worse the failure, the higher the fine, and it can reach millions for large groups.

BEYOND THE FINE

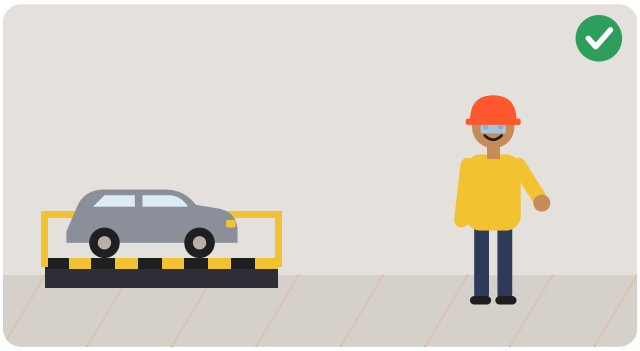
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REAL ENFORCEMENT

£20K

fine and costs for an Isle of Wight garage after a mechanic **fell into an unguarded inspection pit** and needed surgery.

✔ RIGHT WAY



Guarded pit with marked edges.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED + PRISON



Open pit and oil on the floor.

PURPOSE

A 5-foot fall into a pit is enough for serious head injuries.

FIX IT WITHIN

◷ 24 hours

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- Pit covers or barriers
- Edges marked
- Steps and lighting

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Walk every pit
2. Check covers are used
3. Check lighting

Evidence: Photos of pits.

WORST CASE An open pit fall led to a **£10,000 fine plus £10,000 costs** for a small garage. For a larger group, the fine scales with turnover.

HSE-03 HEALTH & SAFETY · HSE · STANDARD 03 OF 06

Isocyanate Paints Controlled (COSHH)

Area **Body & paint shop** | Person in charge **Body Shop Manager** | Regulator **HSE**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · set by turnover and culpability

Individuals: up to **2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL | ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

HSWA

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 · Management of H&S at Work Regs 1999 · **COSHH 2002** regs 6, 7, 9, 11: assessment, control, LEV testing (every 14 months), health surveillance

WHAT WE CHECK

Spraying isocyanate paints happens only in a booth with working extraction, sprayers wear air-fed breathing apparatus, the booth's extraction is tested every 14 months, and sprayers have regular health checks.

Applies when: Body shops spraying isocyanate-containing paints.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Is there a COSHH assessment for isocyanate spraying?
- Q2 Is the booth extraction thoroughly examined and tested at least every 14 months?
- Q3 Do sprayers use air-fed respirators and receive health surveillance?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

Fines are **unlimited**. Courts use the sentencing guidelines: the bigger the company and the worse the failure, the higher the fine, and it can reach millions for large groups.

BEYOND THE FINE

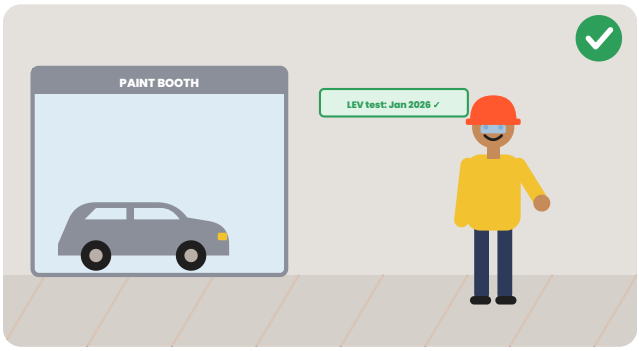
HSE charges **£188 an hour** (Fee for Intervention) for its time when it finds a material breach. It can issue **prohibition notices** that stop work immediately. Directors can be prosecuted personally.

REAL ENFORCEMENT

#1

Isocyanate paints are the leading cause of **occupational asthma** in the UK. Body shops are a priority for HSE inspection.

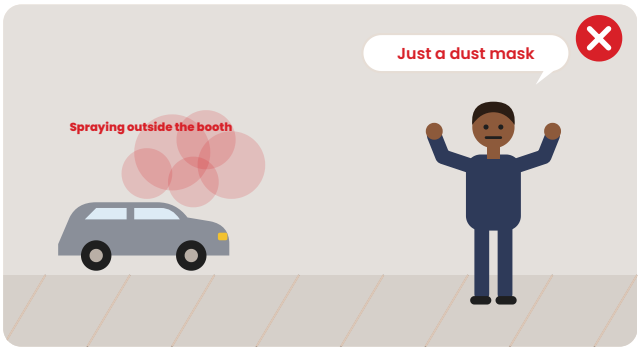
✔ RIGHT WAY



Booth with current LEV test and air-fed mask.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED + PRISON



Spraying in the open with a dust mask.

PURPOSE

Isocyanates are the UK's leading cause of occupational asthma, and the damage is permanent.

FIX IT WITHIN

◷ Immediate

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- COSHH assessment
- LEV tested ≤14 months
- Air-fed RPE used
- Health surveillance in place

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Check the LEV report date
2. Watch a sprayer suit up
3. Check health surveillance records

Evidence: LEV report + surveillance records.

WORST CASE Occupational asthma cases bring **prosecution and civil claims** that follow the business for years.

HSE-04 HEALTH & SAFETY · HSE · STANDARD 04 OF 06

Written Risk Assessments

Area **Whole site** | Person in charge **Dealer Principal · H&S lead** | Regulator **HSE**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · set by turnover and culpability

Individuals: up to **2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

HSWA

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 · Management of H&S at Work Regs 1999 · **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** reg.3 (record if 5+ employees) · HSWA s.2(3) policy

WHAT WE CHECK

There's a written health and safety policy and risk assessments for workshop tasks (lifts, tyres, batteries, EVs, chemicals, manual handling), reviewed when things change.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Is there a written H&S policy (5+ employees)?
- Q2 Are risk assessments recorded for all significant workshop tasks, including high-voltage EV work?
- Q3 Have they been reviewed in the last 12 months or after changes?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

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BEYOND THE FINE

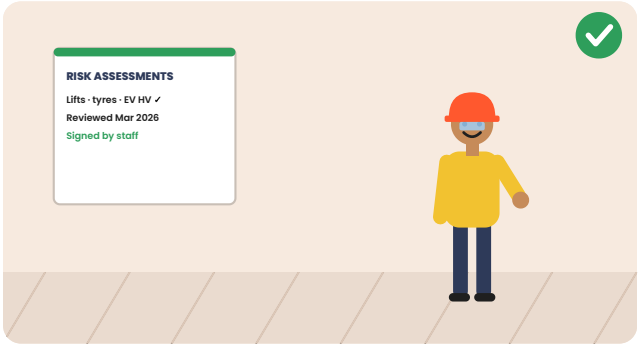
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REAL ENFORCEMENT

£188

per hour: what HSE charges for the time it spends dealing with a **material breach**, from the visit to the paperwork.

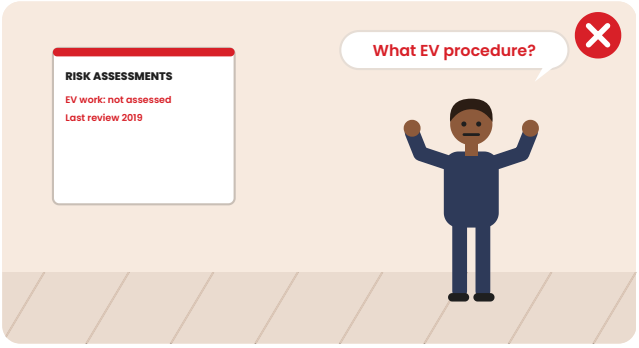
✔ RIGHT WAY



Assessments current, including EV high-voltage work.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED



No EV assessment, last review in 2019.

PURPOSE

The risk assessment is the first thing an HSE inspector asks for, and EV high-voltage work is a new gap for many dealers.

FIX IT WITHIN

◷ 7 days

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- ✔ Written policy
- ✔ Assessments for all significant tasks
- ✔ EV high-voltage covered
- ✔ Reviewed annually

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Request the policy and assessments
2. Check EV work procedures
3. Ask a technician about them

Evidence: Policy + assessments.

WORST CASE Missing assessments turn any accident into an easy prosecution, and HSE charges **£188 an hour** while it deals with it.

HSE-05 HEALTH & SAFETY · HSE · STANDARD 05 OF 06

Tyre, Grinder & Air Equipment Safe

Area **Tyre bay · Service** | Person in charge **Workshop Controller** | Regulator **HSE**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · set by turnover and culpability

Individuals: up to **2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL | ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

HSWA

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 · Management of H&S at Work Regs 1999 · **PUWER 1998** regs 4–11: suitable, maintained, guarded work equipment · **Pressure Systems Safety Regs 2000**

WHAT WE CHECK

Tyre changers and inflation cages, grinders and compressors are guarded, maintained and inspected. The compressor has a written scheme of examination.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Are grinders and machines guarded and maintained?
- Q2 Are split-rim and commercial tyres inflated in a cage?
- Q3 Does the air compressor have a written scheme of examination that's up to date?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

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BEYOND THE FINE

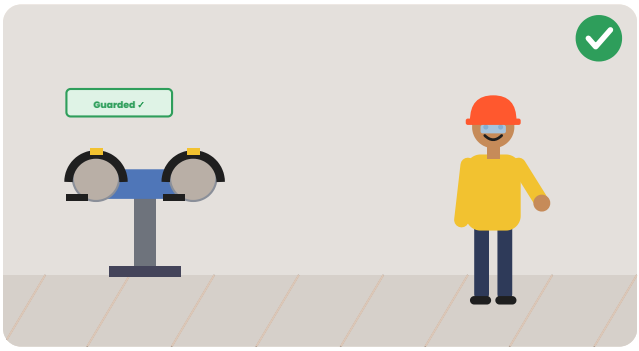
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REAL ENFORCEMENT

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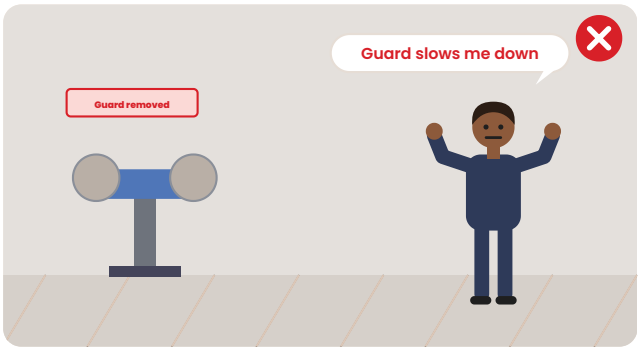
✔ RIGHT WAY



Guards in place, compressor examined.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED + PRISON



Guard removed from the grinder.

PURPOSE

Unguarded machines and exploding tyres cause amputations and head injuries.

FIX IT WITHIN

24 hours

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- All guards fitted
- Inflation cage used
- Compressor examined per scheme

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Inspect machines
2. Check the compressor certificate
3. Watch tyre inflation

Evidence: Photos + compressor certificate.

WORST CASE Machinery injuries are among HSE's most prosecuted cases: **unlimited fines**.

HSE-06 HEALTH & SAFETY · HSE · STANDARD 06 OF 06

Accidents Reported (RIDDOR)

Area **HR · Management** | Person in charge **HR Manager · H&S lead** | Regulator **HSE**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine for failing to report

And HSE investigates the **accident itself**

• SEVERE

THE LAW

HSWA

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 · Management of H&S at Work Regs 1999 · **RIDDOR 2013**: reporting injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences

WHAT WE CHECK

Specified injuries and dangerous occurrences (e.g. a lift failure) are reported to HSE without delay, over-7-day injuries within 15 days, and an accident book is kept.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Is there an accident book, and are all accidents recorded?
- Q2 Are reportable injuries and dangerous occurrences reported to HSE on time?
- Q3 Are accidents investigated to prevent repeats?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

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BEYOND THE FINE

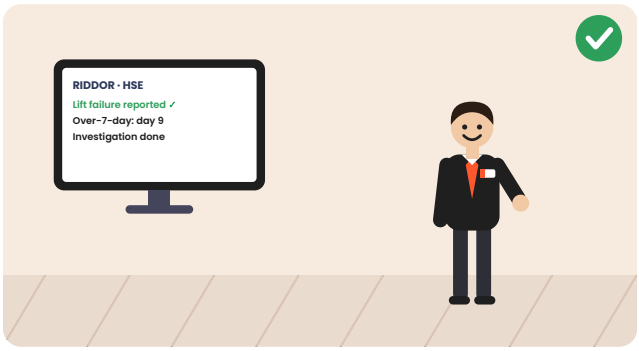
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REAL ENFORCEMENT

£60K

fine and costs for a Liverpool garage after a car fell off a two-post lift whose **arms weren't locked**, crushing a mechanic (sentenced 2025).

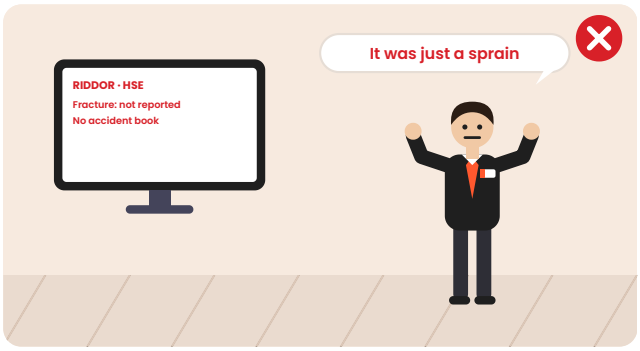
✔ RIGHT WAY



Reported on time and investigated.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED



A fracture never reported.

PURPOSE

Not reporting is a separate offence, and HSE usually finds out through the hospital or the injured worker.

FIX IT WITHIN

◷ 7 days

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- ✓ Accident book
- ✓ Reports on time
- ✓ Investigations logged

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Compare the accident book with absence records
2. Check RIDDOR receipts

Evidence: Accident book + receipts.

WORST CASE Failing to report is itself prosecutable, and HSE investigates the **original accident** anyway.

FIX IT BEFORE SOMEONE GETS HURT

Your 30-day safety action plan.

Today

- [ ] **HSE-01** Vehicle Lifts Examined & Used Safely
  Immediate
- [ ] **HSE-03** Isocyanate Paints Controlled (COSHH)
  Immediate
- [ ] **HSE-02** Inspection Pits Guarded
  24 hours
- [ ] **HSE-05** Tyre, Grinder & Air Equipment Safe
  24 hours

This week

- [ ] **HSE-04** Written Risk Assessments
  7 days
- [ ] **HSE-06** Accidents Reported (RIDDOR)
  7 days

This month

Re-audit the site in 30 days.

?/6 Count your passes. Each fail is an **unlimited fine** waiting for an accident.

SOURCES

- AM Online: Repairer fined £40,000 after mechanic crushed by falling car · am-online.com
- Fleet News: Garage fined after mechanic suffers life-changing injuries (pit fall) · fleetnews.co.uk
- HSE: Fees and charges, current rates (updated Apr 2026) · hse.gov.uk
- HSWA 1974; MHSWR 1999; LOLER 1998; PUWER 1998; COSHH 2002; RIDDOR 2013 · legislation.gov.uk

Disclaimer. For compliance-audit guidance only; not legal advice. Fines depend on sentencing guidelines, turnover and culpability.

AUDIT SIGN-OFF

DEALERSHIP / SITE	AUDITOR	DATE	SCORE __ / 6

BRANCH / DEALER PRINCIPAL SIGNATURE	COMPLIANCE LEAD SIGNATURE