

# Horrific death of UK worker after falling into silo

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A worker died on September 8 after falling 30 feet into an empty silo at his place of work, Dugdale Nutrition, in the Speke area of Liverpool.

Merseyside Police, the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) and North West Ambulance were called at 7.20 p.m. A hazardous response team from MFRS were seen entering a silo behind Dugdale Nutrition wearing breathing apparatus to check for gas. Readings were at normal levels.

Police said the 43-year-old man, who has not been named, was pronounced dead at the scene. An investigation will be carried out between Merseyside Police and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The *Liverpool Echo* newspaper reported that the company is currently being prosecuted by the HSE for alleged safety violations unrelated to this tragedy. The first court hearing at Liverpool Magistrates Court, under Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety Work Act 1974, will take place on October 9.

On its website, Dugdale Nutrition describes itself as a family-owned business with a long history selling animal feed. It operates on sites in Speke and Clitheroe, Lancashire.

It is not yet known what job the victim occupied, but the company is presently advertising a “skilled Production Operative” job. The work appears arduous—a “fast-paced environment”, working in a small team involving a 4-days-on, 4-days-off shift system, working days and nights alternately. A “commitment to complete daily targets are a priority.” The “competitive” salary is not stated.

The company’s website notes in a timeline that in 2015, “The installation of the ‘DSL system’ in the mill, enables us to produce more tonnes per hour. Dugdale Nutrition’s current output is over 160,000 tonnes of feed.”

In 2016, it states, “We began operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.”

For 2017 it stated, “Feed is manufactured 24 hours a day for both bulk and bags. We have dedicated packing teams bagging feed from 6am to 10pm each day during peak seasons.”

The death at Speke highlights the toll of workplace deaths suffered by the working class every year.

The latest figures for work-related deaths for 2024/25 published by the HSE are 124 fatalities. They report that “92 people who were not at work were killed in work-related incidents in 2024/25. This refers to members of the public who were in a workplace but were not working themselves.”

The HSE lists the names and details of these fatalities, including:

- Ryan Jeffries from Fife, 42, died after being struck by a moving vehicle.
- Aleksej Kleinov, 34, died after coming into contact with machinery.
- Luke Haines from Berkhamsted, 41, died after being trapped under machinery.
- David Lee Howells from Swansea, 53, died after falling from a height.

Figures released by the HSE in November for 2023/24 showed 138 fatalities in incidents related to work and 604,000 non-fatal self-reported injuries compiled by the Labour Force Survey. Under the UK regulation RIDDOR (the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences) employers reported 61,663 work related non-fatal injuries.

Workers also suffer from mental health issues related to work. According to the HSE, 1.7 million people self-reported work-related ill health, similar to the previous year, and higher than the pre-pandemic level—possibly indicating the incidence of long COVID cases. These ill

health statistics translate to 33.7 million working days lost.

Half of that number, or 776,000, reported illness associated with stress, anxiety or depression.

Stress-inducing factors relating to work include speed-ups and working to targets, long hours, staff shortages, problems juggling childcare with work commitments, an expectation that workers who are ill should drag themselves into work including with COVID, poor pay and fear of redundancy.

Other work-related illnesses include 543,000 self-reported sufferers of musculoskeletal disorders, the result of previous or recent work-related wear and tear on the body.

The industry with the most work-related deaths in 2023/24 was construction, most related to falling from a height. In this timeframe 51 workers died. The number of agricultural deaths was 23, the next highest, then manufacturing with 16.

In 2022/23, the HSE prosecuted just 216 companies under health and safety violations, with a 94 percent success rate. They admit, however, that because of limited resources they only pursue cases whose success they feel they can guarantee.

Prosecution results in fines, depending on the size of the company, and occasionally convictions leading to prison sentences.

Since 2010, the HSE has suffered government funding cuts of £100 million, leading to staff shortages, HSE chair Sarah Newton reported to a House of Commons Select Committee in February.

Answering questions from Members of Parliament during the Select Committee meeting, HSE Chief Executive, Sarah Albon, said the regulator has been “shifting more resources” into major hazard sites “as budgets have been squeezed”.

Referring to temporary freezes in recruitment at the HSE a decade ago—the result of central government austerity—Albon said this has been “a drain on our ability to do as much productive work as we’d want to do”. She said, “We have undoubtedly had to recover from recruitment freezes,” adding “the proportion of really experienced to less experienced [inspectors] is not where we’d want it to be”.

The Labour government under Prime Minister Keir Starmer has no intention of addressing dangers at work. With mounting national debt, governments throughout

Europe are concluding they can no longer afford the welfare state, including spending money on occupational health and safety.

As long as the safety and well-being of workers is subordinated to production for profit, avoidable deaths and injuries at work will continue.

These figures are an indictment of capitalism, and all parliamentary parties, including Labour, and the complicity of the trade union bureaucracy. While the Trades Union Congress provides training for health and safety representatives, the collaboration of their affiliated unions with employers to increase profitability comes at the expense of the safety, health and well-being of members.

In every workplace, workers must take control of their own safety out of the hands of employers and the trade union bureaucrats in alliance with them to secure profitability. The life of every single worker matters.

In the United States, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFCs) held a public hearing in Detroit on July 27 to present the initial findings of its independent investigation into the work-related death of 63-year-old Ronald Adams Sr in April. Adams was a skilled tradesman at Stellantis’ Dundee Engine Complex in Michigan. His death remains unexplained by Stellantis, the United Auto Workers and the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Adams was crushed to death when machinery suddenly became active. Testimony at the hearing reported safety violations at the plant with the collusion of the United Auto Workers bureaucracy.

Only through the self-organisation of the working class building rank-and-file committees, linking the fight for health and safety in the workplace to the broader struggle for socialism, can a path of effective struggle be opened. Contact us at the form below today.



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