

# Company fined after worker is fatally crushed in trench

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A company has been fined £2.6 million after an employee was killed when the trench he was working in collapsed on him in Lancashire.

James Sim, a 32-year-old worker, from Barry, South Wales, a sub-contractor working on behalf of Balfour Beatty Utility Solutions Limited. On the 14 April 2010, Mr Sim was working in a trench, laying ducting for new cable for an offshore windfarm that was being built off the coast by Heysham, Lancashire. The trench was dug to a depth of 2.4 metres, without any shoring. Mr Sim was killed when he became trapped in the trench after it collapsed on him.

Balfour Beatty Utility Solutions Limited pleaded guilty at Preston Crown Court today after an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The Court heard that Balfour Beatty failed to adequately risk assess the works or control the way in which the excavation took place.

HSE inspector Chris Hatton said after the hearing: "The level of this fine should serve as a warning to industry not to ignore health and safety matters.

"Balfour Beatty failed to adequately assess, plan and supervise the work being undertaken. Trench collapses are easy to prevent, and it is disappointing that James' life was lost in such a tragic way.

"The family has shown great patience and support throughout this investigation which is a credit to both them and James' memory."

Balfour Beatty Utility Solutions Limited, of Park Square Newton, Chambers Road, Chapeltown, Sheffield pleaded guilty of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Regulation 31(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 and Regulation 3(1)(a) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and was fined £2.6million with £54,000 costs.