

What the Latest HSE Fatality Figures Mean for Procurement

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The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has confirmed that 126 workers were killed in work-related incidents across Great Britain during 2025/26, the lowest annual total outside the Covid-19 pandemic years. Construction, historically one of the higher-risk sectors, accounted for 25 worker deaths, down from 35 the previous year and below the five-year average of 37.

These are encouraging figures, and worth acknowledging as such. But the more useful exercise for anyone involved in procurement is not simply to note that the number has fallen. It is to look at what, specifically, continues to cause fatal injuries, and to ask whether current supplier assessment processes are actually checking for those risks in enough detail.

Where the risk still concentrates

Falls from height remain the single biggest cause of fatal injury across all industries, responsible for 31 deaths in 2025/26, a pattern that has held for more than two decades. Being struck by a moving vehicle was the second most common cause, closely followed by being struck by a moving object. Together, these three causes account for the clear majority of workplace deaths recorded this year.

That consistency is instructive. These are not unpredictable or unusual hazards. They are well understood, well documented risks that appear on the same list year after year, which means they are also risks that a thorough pre-qualification process should be well placed to catch.

Eleanor Eaton, Chair of [SSIP](#), said: “What stands out in this year’s figures is not that the risks are new, but that they aren’t. Falls from height and vehicle movements have been the leading causes of workplace death for as long as these statistics have been recorded. That should prompt procurement teams to look

closely at whether their assessment processes are genuinely testing for competence in these specific areas, rather than accepting general assurances that safety is being managed.”

What that means in practice

A method statement that simply confirms work at height will be “carried out safely” is not sufficient. Procurement teams should be looking for specifics: how work is planned to avoid height wherever possible, what collective protection is in place rather than personal protective equipment alone, and evidence that supervisors on site are competent to enforce those controls day to day.

Similarly, wherever contractors work around plant, deliveries or live traffic, procurement teams should expect clear evidence of pedestrian and vehicle segregation, banksman arrangements and site traffic management, rather than generic policy statements.

The blind spot in facilities management

One area that deserves more attention than it typically receives is facilities management. FM covers building maintenance, cleaning and support services, activities that routinely involve exactly the risks driving this year’s figures: work at height, vehicle movements and the handling of moving equipment and materials. Because HSE records fatalities by broad industry category rather than by activity, FM related deaths are absorbed into wider sectors and rarely appear as a distinct, visible risk.

That lack of visibility is worth addressing. FM contracts are sometimes let on the assumption that the work carries lower risk than construction or manufacturing, when in practice a maintenance contractor working at height on a roof, or an engineer operating around vehicles in a loading bay, faces many of the same hazards as their counterparts on a construction site. Procurement teams responsible for FM contracts should apply the same standard of scrutiny to contractor competence as they would in higher profile sectors, rather than treating assessment as a lighter touch exercise because the work sits under a broader, less alarming heading.

The role of SSIP in procurement assurance

One way procurement teams can strengthen their assessment process is by making use of the Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) assessment framework. SSIP provides a recognised and consistent approach to evaluating a contractor’s health and safety competence before work begins, helping clients avoid duplication while maintaining robust standards.

Rather than relying solely on supplier questionnaires or self-declarations, an SSIP assessment requires contractors to demonstrate evidence of their health and safety management arrangements, including the policies, procedures, training and risk controls needed to manage workplace hazards effectively. This gives procurement teams greater confidence that baseline competence has been independently assessed.

Looking ahead

This year’s figures are a genuine cause for cautious optimism. But the causes of fatal injury have changed little in structure over the past two decades, even as the overall number has fallen. That points to one clear, practical takeaway for procurement: assessment processes are only as useful as the specific risks they are designed to check for. Consistent, detailed scrutiny of how contractors actually manage height,

vehicles and moving equipment, not just whether they say they do, remains one of the clearest levers procurers have.