



# Taking it down safely

## lessons from an event structure prosecution

Planning the dismantling, using the right lifting equipment and listening to the crew

**OTAS Insight CI-002 | Operational • Tactical • Strategic**

Correct as of 20 October 2026 | Great Britain | Not legal advice | [otas.live/insights/](https://otas.live/insights/)



# The short version: the get out needs its own plan

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## What happened

### A beam fell

- Steel frame being dismantled
- Strap used to lower a beam
- Strap not designed for lowering
- Worker seriously injured

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## The law

### Plan and write it down

- Dismantling is construction work
- Arrangements in writing first
- Lowering is a lifting operation
- Right equipment for the use

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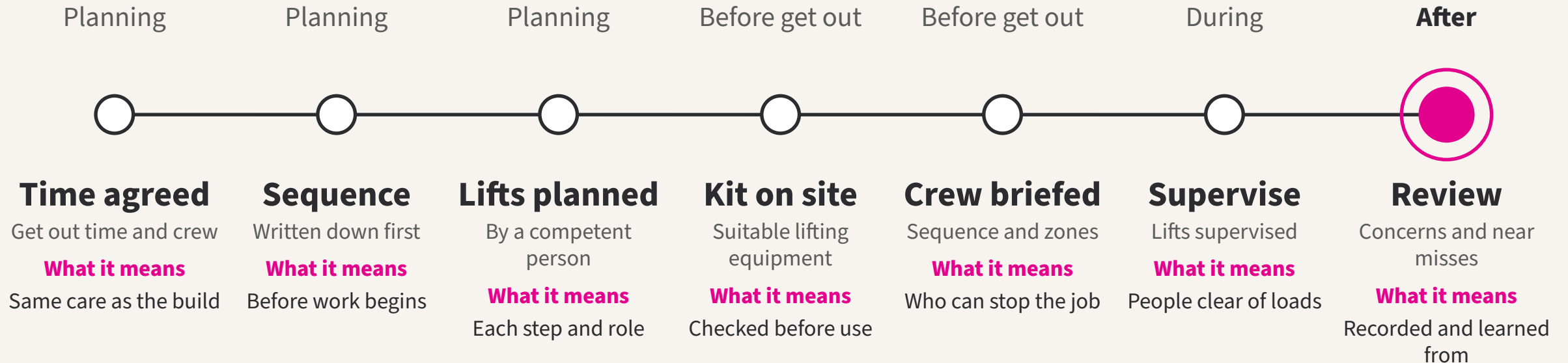
## The outcome

### Company and director

- Company fined £12,000
- Plus £6,949 costs
- Director: community order

As published by HSE on 30 July 2026. This deck reports the court outcome only and adds no findings.

# Planning a get out: 7 steps in order



Order drawn from CDM 2015, LOLER, PUWER and HSE guidance. Not an official timeline.

# What HSE reported about the case

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## 01 • Task

### **Dismantling**

An internal steel frame

A temporary structure

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## 02 • Load

### **Steel beam**

Weighing over 100kg

Being lowered

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## 03 • Kit

### **Ratchet strap**

Not designed for lifting

Or lowering loads

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## 04 • Failure

### **The strap failed**

The beam fell

On the worker

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## 05 • Method

### **Chosen on site**

Workers told where to stand

Continued after concerns

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## 06 • Finding

### **HSE investigation**

Not properly planned

Or carried out safely

Incident 26 June 2024. Sentencing 28 July 2026. As published by HSE.

# The legal duties behind the charges

- **CDM 2015 reg 20** Dismantling planned and carried out to prevent danger. Arrangements in writing before work begins.
- **CDM 2015 reg 19** Structures kept from collapse while temporarily unstable. Temporary structures used only as designed.
- **CDM in events** Applies to building, fitting out and taking down temporary structures.
- **PUWER reg 4** Work equipment used only for operations it is suitable for.
- **LOLER reg 8** Lifting or lowering: planned by a competent person, supervised, done safely.
- **HSWA s.37** Directors and managers liable where an offence is due to their consent, connivance or neglect.

## The outcome

**Company** fined £12,000

**Costs** £6,949

**Director** community order

**Unpaid work** 75 hours

## The point

Dismantling is construction work. Plan it like the build.

# Why the get out catches crews out



**HSE research:** “the deconstruction process is not simply a reversal of the construction process”.

# 100kg: the steel beam being lowered on a strap

# 100kg

and more: the steel beam lowered on a ratchet strap that was not designed for lifting or lowering loads.

**Right kit.** Use lifting equipment of adequate strength for lifting and lowering.

**Plan.** Every lift planned by a competent person.

**Supervise.** Supervision in proportion to the risk.

**Keep clear.** Nobody under or beside a moving load.

The strap failed and the beam fell on the worker.

# Operational: what riggers and crew do

- **Right kit** Lifting equipment for lifting and lowering. Never straps or improvised kit.
- **Know the order** Know the dismantling sequence before you start.
- **Keep clear** Stay out from under and beside any moving load.
- **Speak up** If a method looks unsafe, say so.
- **Stop** Stop the job until the method is reviewed.
- **No blame** Nobody is criticised for stopping the job.

## Whose job it is

Managers plan the get out. Everyone on the crew can stop it.

## What to expect at briefing

- The sequence
- The lifting kit
- The exclusion zone
- Who supervises lifts
- Unsure? Ask before you start.

**Injured or in danger? Use the site emergency procedure and call the emergency services.**

# Tactical: what crew chiefs and production managers set up

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01

## Written arrangements

Sequence written before the get out

Keep: method statement

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02

## Planned lifts

By a competent person

Keep: lift plan

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03

## Supervised lifts

In proportion to the risk

Keep: supervisor named

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04

## Kit checked

Suitable lifting equipment on site

Keep: equipment list

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05

## Crew briefed

Sequence, zones and stop rule

Keep: briefing record

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06

## Concerns acted on

Stop, review, then carry on

Keep: near miss log

**Three levels:** Operational for riggers and crew, Tactical for crew chiefs and managers, Strategic for directors and clients.

# Strategic: what directors and clients decide

| Decision          | What it looks like                              | Evidence to keep    |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Time</b>       | The get out given the same time as the build    | Production schedule |
| <b>People</b>     | Enough competent crew for the get out           | Crew plan           |
| <b>Equipment</b>  | Lifting kit budgeted for the get out            | Hire list           |
| <b>CDM duties</b> | Understood and allocated for build and takedown | Project notes       |
| <b>Stop rule</b>  | Supervisors and crew backed when they stop      | Policy              |
| <b>Learning</b>   | Near misses and concerns reviewed               | Review notes        |
| <b>Liability</b>  | Directors understand personal liability         | Board note          |
| <b>Clients</b>    | Get out risks raised at contract stage          | Contract notes      |

Not a complete list. Follow the advice you receive for your structure.

# What we don't know yet: 6 open points

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## 01 • Appeal

### Any appeal

None found on 20 Oct 2026

Now: check before citing

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## 02 • Plan

### Written arrangements

HSE does not say

Now: do not assume

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## 03 • Reasons

### Sentencing reasons

Not published

Now: see the guideline

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## 04 • Nations

### Northern Ireland

Own rules and regulator

Now: check locally

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## 05 • Research

### HSE research date

Published 2011

Now: duties apply today

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## 06 • Your kit

### Your lifting gear

Is it on site for the get out?

Now: check the hire list

Open on 20 October 2026. Check the official sources before acting.



Supporting Events  
and Professionals  
at every stage

## Get new Insights

Get new Insights, and the full CI-002 report, at [otas.live/insights/](https://otas.live/insights/)

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Key sources: HSE press release and guidance, CDM 2015, PUWER, LOLER, Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Spotted an error? Tell us and we will correct it. General information, not legal advice. Correct as of 20 October 2026.

### Work with OTAS

Planning the build and get out for your next event?

**Request a call with OTAS to discuss how we can help**

### **Briefing card • about 1 minute**

“Tonight we take this structure down in this order. Lifting and lowering is done only with the lifting kit, never with straps or anything else.

Nobody stands under or beside a load being moved. If you think anything is unsafe, say so and we stop.

**Sequence:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Lifting kit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exclusion zone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Lift supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

Nobody will be criticised for stopping the job. Any questions?”

Read at every get out briefing. Fill in the blanks first.

## Before the get out: the checklist, by level

**Operational** right kit, know the sequence, keep clear of loads, speak up and stop.

**Tactical and Strategic** written arrangements, planned and supervised lifts, time and kit for the get out, supervisors backed.