

Burton fire alarms boss banned after failing to pay more than £300,000 in tax across two companies

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Director used two companies to repeatedly evade debts, an abusive phoenixism behaviour.

- Alex Shorthose paid himself almost £400,000 across two companies while paying HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) just £5,368
- Both companies were shut down in 2024 after running up combined debts of more than £300,000 in unpaid VAT and PAYE
- Shorthose has been banned as a company director until April 2032 following investigations by the Insolvency Service

The owner of two firms which installed fire alarms has been banned as a company director after paying almost nothing of the more than £300,000 owed in tax.

Alex Shorthose caused Siamo Fire and Security Limited and Alex Fire and Security Limited to run up VAT and PAYE debts of £185,538 and £142,092 between December 2017 and January 2024.

During this period, Shorthose paid himself £215,870 from the first company and £171,325 from the second.

HMRC received a total of only £5,368 from Siamo Fire and Security Limited and nothing at all from Alex Fire and Security Limited.

The 42-year-old took no steps to formally dissolve or liquidate Siamo Fire and Security Limited when it stopped trading in December 2021.

Instead, he repeated the same misconduct all over again at Alex Fire and Security Limited.

Both companies went into compulsory liquidation in early 2024 following petitions from HMRC.

Shorthose, of Scalpcliffe Road, Burton-on-Trent, has been disqualified as a company director for six years.

Kevin Read, Chief Investigator at the Insolvency Service, said:

Alex Shorthose used the cynical but well-worn tactic of running up debts at one company, walking away, and starting again at another. His misconduct was not short-lived – it lasted for more than six years across two companies.

That is what we mean by abusive phoenixism, and it is deeply damaging. It gives dishonest directors an unfair advantage over competitors who pay their taxes, and it deprives public services of funds they depend on.

We will continue to work with HMRC to identify these individuals and stop them acting as company directors.

Richard Hopwood, Head of Insolvency at HMRC, said:

We are determined to allow honest businesses to thrive which is why it's crucial we work closely with the Insolvency Service and other partners to take action against anyone involved in abusive phoenixism that undermines the tax system.

The majority pay the tax that is due, but we will pursue those who refuse to play by the rules.

Siamo Fire and Security Limited registered for VAT in October 2017 and submitted returns showing it owed £113,918.

However, the company made only two payments, leaving £112,920 outstanding at liquidation.

PAYE returns from December 2017 totalled £90,012 but again only two payments were made, leaving £72,618 unpaid.

The company received £942,481 between December 2017 and December 2021. Payments in the hundreds of thousands of pounds were made to Shorthose's employees and in business expenses.

However, just £5,368 went to HMRC while £215,870 was paid to Shorthose himself.

Alex Fire and Security Limited racked up £125,265 in unpaid VAT after registering in July 2021. Again, no payments were made at all.

PAYE returns from December 2021 totalled £23,770, again with nothing paid.

Of the £624,322 received between February 2022 and liquidation, payments were again made to his employees and trade creditors.

HMRC received nothing while a further £171,325 went directly to Shorthose.

The Secretary of State for Business and Trade accepted a disqualification undertaking from Shorthose, and his ban started on Tuesday 14 April.

It prevents him from being involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the permission of the court.

Further information

- Alex Shorthose is of Scalpcliffe Road, Burton-on-Trent. His date of birth is 16 September 1983
- Siamo Fire and Security Limited (company number 11005445)
- Alex Fire and Security Limited (company number 11848613)
- Individuals subject to a disqualification order or undertaking are bound by a range of restrictions
- Read more about the role of the Insolvency Service in investigating abusive phoenixism
- Directors can find information about their obligations and responsibilities at the Insolvency Service's Director Information Hub
- Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/burton-fire-alarms-boss-banned-after-failing-to-pay-more-than-300000-in-tax-across-two-companies>