

CONSTRUCTION / BUILDING WORK

Building work including construction, refurbishment and building maintenance may often be carried out by proprietors and their employees. In some cases, they may decide to develop this area to offer construction and building maintenance services to others e.g. for commercial or domestic clients. When carrying out or managing construction / building work for others the firm is classed as a contractor.

All building and maintenance work involves risks and proper controls must be put in place. The information detailed below outlines the key risks and control measures to be considered and links to further guidance to assist businesses to carry out building and construction work safely.

LEGISLATION

UK construction legislation focuses attention on effective planning and management of construction and building work and places requirements on employers to ensure that people working for them, are safe and can do so without risks to their health.

It is necessary for all construction and building maintenance companies to understand the legal requirements that are placed upon them for the type of work undertaken wherever they operate. In some cases construction work is notifiable to the enforcing authorities.

COMPETENCE

Competence to undertake building and maintenance tasks is necessary for all persons involved. You must assess in advance whether you have the capabilities within your workforce to carry out a particular job. Specific training is legally required to control certain high risk work such as; manual handling, working at height, driving telehandlers or forklifts, electrical work etc.

In the UK the HSE and Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) provide detailed guidance on training requirements and information on other recommended training schemes in relation to construction work. These include the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) and Site Supervisors and Site Manager Safety Training Schemes. Such schemes are helpful in developing workforce competence for construction and building work.

PLANNING

Everyone controlling or involved in construction and building work has health and safety responsibilities. Ensuring that the proposed work is not going to put others at risk requires planning and organisation. This applies whatever the size of the works.

At the planning stage consideration should be given to the following:

- Pre-surveys to identify existing hazards and controls e.g. asbestos or hazardous materials, structural safety, overhead and underground services etc.
- General access for staff, work vehicles and deliveries
- Materials storage and waste management
- Segregation of work areas required to protect members of the public (including children) and signage
- Facilities for staff welfare, PPE storage, first aid etc.
- Emergency procedures including fire action plans and accident and incident reporting
- Confirming whether the construction works are notifiable to the enforcing authorities.



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ASSESSING THE RISKS

Key risks for consideration during construction and building work include the following:

- **Asbestos** - Identify presence of asbestos prior to work, implement controls to prevent release of or exposure to asbestos fibres. Engage competent persons where required
- **Slips, trips and falls** - Assess, eliminate and control the risks of slips, trips and falls during building and maintenance works
- **Work at height** - The hierarchy of controls for working at height, from working at ground level, using towers, scaffold, platforms and ladders and, as a last resort, fall restraints and safety netting
- **Structural stability** - Assess the risks and prevent unintentional structural collapse during alterations, demolition and dismantling; and the measures you need to take to prevent accidents in excavations
- **Lifting operations** - All lifting operations involving lifting equipment must be properly planned by a competent person, appropriately supervised, and carried out in a safe manner
- **Electricity** - Work safely with power supplies and electrical equipment, map overhead power lines and underground cables to prevent accidental contact with machinery

- **Fire** - Identify the risks of fire, control combustible materials and ignition sources, and make it clear exactly what to do if fire does break out
- **Mobile plant and vehicles** - Assess the risks, establish competence to operate and control access to telehandlers, excavators, mobile work platforms, dumpers and road vehicles
- **Demolition** - All demolition, dismantling and structural alteration should be carefully planned and carried out by competent practitioners.

USEFUL LINKS

HSE Website

Health and Safety in construction:
www.hse.gov.uk/construction

What you need to know if you are doing or having construction and building work carried out:
www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/buildingcontrol.htm

Essential toolkit for smaller construction contractors:
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg344.pdf

Construction Industry Training Board:
www.citb.co.uk/cards-testing

The Next Step

The information provided in this guidance is a brief overview of a diverse work activity. This activity may require further assessment and consultancy work completing to ensure statutory compliance.

NFU Mutual Risk Management Services (RMS) can provide additional support in this area using one of its specialist in-house consultants who are based around the UK.

Please contact RMS on **0800 132 029**, where we can discuss your requirements further.

Alternatively please contact your local NFU Mutual office to discuss any requirements or visit the NFU Mutual website to view our RMS services www.nfumutual.co.uk



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