

One size doesn't fit all

A construction phase plan is a key requirement of all construction projects. This guide tells you where your responsibilities lie.

The construction phase plan is the safety-management system for the construction phase of a project.

It is the duty of the principal contractor, as defined in the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015), to coordinate and produce the plan. But other duty holders under CDM 2015, including principal designers and designers, are required to contribute to it and work under its arrangements. Even the client, as project originator, has a responsibility to ensure that the plan is adequately developed before allowing work to begin.

CDM 2015: designers' duties

Under Part 3 of CDM 2015, designers are required to have the skills, knowledge and experience of health and safety for projects they are involved in. Design organisations must also have the organisational capability to discharge these duties. Designers are also required to cooperate and coordinate with other stakeholders on the project team and in the vicinity of the project site, and have a duty to abide by the 'general principles of prevention'. These provide a hierarchy of risk avoidance, reduction and management for everyone to follow. They have been interpreted as ERIC for simplicity. ERIC stands for Eliminate, Reduce, Inform, Control. Designers also have specific duties in relation to their contribution to a project, and to the construction phase plan and file.

Design Guide ADM004 What designers should know provides details of these.

Life outside the tick box.



When is a construction phase plan required?

A construction phase plan is required on all projects. It is a written plan of how the practical site work will be managed. It must be integrated with other aspects of project planning. For instance space for safe use of plant with appropriate segregation from pedestrians and the public is a matter for construction phase planning that affects commercial and operational aspects of a project as well. Properly integrated health and safety management is most likely to deliver effective results and contribute to successful project delivery.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 allow small companies with fewer than 5 employees to avoid the need to have written safety management systems. This exemption is not included in CDM 2015.

What to include in the construction phase plan

The structure of the construction phase plan is not prescribed by law. Its content needs to be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the risks of a project and a variety of other project-specific factors.

Consider the following operations, by way of illustration:

- The demolition of a structure on a brownfield site undergoing substantial redevelopment
- The same demolition, but adjacent to a hospital that carries out laser eye surgery

While both demolitions pose serious risks, each also presents its own, site-specific problems. All of these risks need to be managed effectively, and this needs to be planned for at an early stage.

Appendix 3 of the Guidance to CDM 2015 contains a list of topics that may be included in the construction phase plan.

However the plan is structured, it is essential that all of its information be easily and clearly accessible to those who will need to respond to it. In other words, the whole project team should find it an indispensable and useful core document.

The plan should be considered a live document, to be reviewed and updated as the project progresses. Contributions should be made by all, and regularly communicated to all.

Most principal contractors have their own standard format. This makes life easier for them but can be confusing for other members of the team who are required to learn a different approach for each project as well as manage their own safety management systems.



Topics to include in the plan: the CDM 2015 Guidance list

The Health and Safety Executive Guidance suggests that you consider the following topics, in relation to the construction phase plan.

- a) A description of the project such as key dates and details of key members of the project team;
- b) The management of the work including:
 - i) The health and safety aims for the project;
 - ii) The site rules;
 - iii) Arrangements to ensure cooperation between project team members and coordination of their work, eg regular site meetings;
 - iv) Arrangements for involving workers
 - v) Site induction
 - vi) Welfare facilities; and
 - vii) Fire and emergency procedures;
- c) The control of any specific site risks listed in Schedule 3 where they are relevant to the work involved.

Useful resources

HSG150 Rev – Health and Safety in Construction
Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and Guidance

See elsewhere on SID:

ADM004 What designers should know