

# Building work and repair



During the periods when buildings are undergoing repairs, maintenance or extension work, there is an increased risk of fire, theft and accident.

Building work is likely to involve the presence of people who are unfamiliar with your premises, and may see the introduction of additional hazards, such as combustible materials, flammable liquids and hot working used in the construction process.

Security can also be compromised with the increased number of people on your premises. The use of scaffolding can also give access to upper floors. You should maintain extra vigilance during these periods and closely supervise the activities of all contractors.

You are responsible for ensuring that anyone working on your premises is competent and will work safely and with due regard for the safety of others. You must also be able to provide evidence that the people you select and appoint to carry out work are suitably trained and competent. We recommend that you carry out due diligence prior to the appointment of any contractor.

Contractors should be requested to provide:

- A Method Statement and risk assessment for the works they are carrying out.
- Evidence of public liability insurance cover, adequate to cover any damage to your premises.
- Details of professional qualifications and certification of the people conducting the work.

## Basic precautions

Everyone working on site should be given a basic induction on the fire and emergency procedures and general rules of conduct for your site.

They should be shown the location of telephones and told where responsible officials can be found in the event of an emergency. You should inform the local police and fire and rescue service if major repair works are to be undertaken.

During the contract period, responsible officials should inspect the buildings carefully at the end of every day to ensure that all is in order. Whenever possible, spot checks should also be made during the day.

## Smoking

Smoking should be prohibited wherever possible. Where permitted in the grounds, it should be confined to clearly defined areas with adequate waste disposal arrangements, and areas thoroughly inspected at the end of each working day.

## Temporary electric wiring

All temporary electric wiring should comply with BS 7671 'Requirements for Electrical Installations'. Circuits should be physically disconnected from the mains supply at the end of the day, even where the mains switch is turned off at night.

## Waste materials

Paper, plastic, cardboard, crates and all other combustible waste materials should be removed from the site at the end of each working day or kept in a lockable lidded metal skip well away from buildings. We would suggest a distance of at least ten metres.

## Flammable materials

Provision should be made for gas cylinders, paints, oils, flammable liquids and buildings materials to be stored outside and well away from buildings. Large quantities of liquids should be stored in a bunded container to contain any spillage. If spraying of roof timbers is undertaken, this should only be done in a well-ventilated atmosphere. Smoking should be banned and all forms of heating switched off until work is complete.

## Site huts

Temporary huts should be erected well away from the buildings and secured outside of working hours.

## Hot work

Hot work includes the use of blowlamps, hot air guns, cutting torches, angle grinders and welding apparatus. You should institute a HOT WORK PERMIT SYSTEM. This system will ensure, as far as possible, that contractors obtain permission from an authorised person before commencing such work and take appropriate fire precautions during and after the work.

A downloadable Hot Work Permit is available from our [website](#).

## Fire Stopping

Your buildings will feature rooms such as boiler and plant rooms which have been constructed as 'fire compartments'. These rooms will have been constructed with solid walls, floors and ceilings designed to contain a fire long enough to allow for the safe evacuation of the building in the event of an emergency, as well as to reduce the risk of fire spreading.

During the course of building works it may be necessary to make openings in the compartment walls, ceiling, or floor to pass service pipes and cables through. In order to maintain the integrity of the 'fire compartment' these openings need to be refilled with suitable fire resistant materials once work has been completed. We recommend that you introduce an inspection regime for such works to ensure that the integrity of 'the fire compartment' has been reinstated following completion of building works.

## Theft

During building work, you should take extra precautions to secure your premises. Areas not in use should be kept locked and vulnerable or attractive items and equipment should be kept in secure stores. It is worth noting that intruder alarm systems may be prone to false alarms during this period, due to dust, draughts etc. However, they should not be turned off. Where scaffolding is being used, to prevent access to upper levels, all ladders etc. should be removed at the end of each working day. You should also consider the use of intruder alarm protection on external scaffolding.

## Safety

Suitable barriers and warning notices should be erected to keep unauthorised persons away from the site. Remember, the law requires a greater duty of care to be shown towards children than towards adults.

## Legal Requirements

The Construction (Design & Management) Regulations apply to all construction work in Great Britain. You should be aware of your responsibilities under these regulations.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publish a free guide for building owners, users or managing agents who are having maintenance, small scale building work or other minor works carried out in connection with a business:

A Short Guide for Clients on the 'Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015' – [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg411.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg411.pdf).

As a 'client' (an individual or organisation for whom construction work is being carried out), you have a number of specific duties under the CDM Regulations; however you can appoint a competent person to assist you in the discharge of these duties if you wish. The Approved Code of Practice to the CDM Regulations summarises the duties of a client as follows:

- Appoint the right people at the right time (Principal Designer and Principal Contractor)
- Ensure there are suitable management arrangements for the project
- Allow sufficient time and resources for all stages
- Provide pre-construction information to designers and contractors
- Communicate regularly with your designer and building contractor
- Ensure adequate welfare facilities are available on site
- Ensure a Construction Phase Plan is in place
- Keep a health and safety file
- Protect members of the public, including your employees
- Ensure workplaces are designed correctly.

A project is notifiable to the HSE if the construction phase will be longer than 30 days with more than 20 workers working at the same time or 500 person days of construction work, and for such projects, clients must:

- Appoint a CDM coordinator
- Appoint a Principal contractor
- Make sure construction work does not start unless there are suitable welfare facilities, and a construction phase plan is in place
- Provide information relating to the health and safety file to the CDM coordinator
- Retain and provide access to the health and safety file.

Further guidance is available from the HSE website: 'Managing Health and Safety in Construction. Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. Guidance on regulations L153 HSE Books 2015 ISBN 978 0 7176 6626 3' - [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l153.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l153.htm)

## Insurance

As soon as building work is contemplated, you should inform us of the proposed work. Your architect will indicate your insurance obligations under the terms of the contract. You may need to arrange additional insurance cover in respect of:

- (a) the existing structure, together with the contents, and
- (b) the works and all unfixed materials and goods other than builders' plant, tools and other equipment.

You should ascertain that the contractors have suitable insurances in place against public liability (third party) risks and employers' liability risks and that such insurances have been extended, by specific reference, to protect the interests of your business, by the inclusion of an indemnity to principal clause.

## Fire prevention on construction sites

A code of practice, 'Fire Protection on Construction Sites, 9th Edition', is published jointly by The Fire Protection Association and the Construction Confederation. The code gives guidance on emergency procedures, fire protection, temporary covering materials, electrical and gas supplies, storage, portable fire extinguishers, site security against arson, temporary accommodation, site storage of flammable liquids and waste materials.

Ecclesiastical will usually require compliance with this code on all projects with an original value of £1million or above.

It is good practice to ensure that contractors follow the code on all contract works including alterations, fitting out, renovations or repair work, in order to minimise the risk of accidental or malicious fires. The Code of Practice is available from the Fire Protection Association's [website](#).

## Need to contact us?

For further advice Ecclesiastical customers can call our risk advice line on **0345 600 7531** (Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm, excluding bank holidays) or email us at [risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com](mailto:risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com) and one of our experts will call you back within 24 hours.

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