

CDM CO-ORDINATION SERVICE

If you are a commercial organisation carrying out or arranging significant building or refurbishment work for yourselves, as the client, or for someone else who is the client, then you need to consider if the project falls under Part 2 of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM). Broadly this means if the construction work on site will take:

- more than 30 days, or
- more than 500 person days to complete

i.e. it might only take 20 days but if you have 25 people on site then that equates to 500 person days.

This part of the Regulations does not apply if the Client is a domestic client.

Phone EnviroSafety Solutions to find out for free if these regulations apply to your project. If they do, then you will need to appoint a CDM Co-ordinator who will act as your project health and safety advisor.

INTRODUCTION

Our role of CDM co-ordinator is to provide the client with a key project advisor in respect of construction health and safety risk management matters. We assist and advise the client on the appointment of competent designers and contractors and the adequacy of management arrangements. We ensure proper co-ordination of the health and safety aspects of the design process. We facilitate good communication and cooperation between project team members and co-ordinate the preparation of the health and safety file.

The early appointment of the CDM co-ordinator is crucial for effective planning and establishing management arrangements from the start. The regulations require the appointment to take place as soon as is practicable after initial design work or other preparation for construction work has begun. This will allow the client to appraise their project needs and objectives, including the business case and any possible constraints on development to enable them to decide whether or not to proceed with the project before appointing the CDM co-ordinator.

As CDM co-ordinator, we need to be in a position to be able to co-ordinate the design work and advise on the suitability of the designs, and therefore we should be appointed before significant detailed design work begins. Significant detailed design work includes preparation of the initial concept design and implementation of any strategic brief. As a scheme moves into the detailed design stage, it becomes more difficult to make fundamental changes that eliminate hazards and reduce risks associated with early design decisions.

Proper consideration of the health and safety implications of the design for those who build and maintain the structure will make a significant contribution to reducing its whole life cost, and will make delivery to time, cost and quality more likely.

It is crucial that the CDM co-ordinator has sufficient independence to carry out the tasks effectively. Ideally the CDM Co-ordinator should not be a division of the architect, the structural engineer, the mechanical engineer, the electrical engineer or the quantity surveyor.

OUR DUTIES AS CDM CO-ORDINATOR UNDER THE CDM REGULATIONS 2007

Under the CDM Regulations 2007 we are required to:

- Give suitable and sufficient advice and assistance to clients in order to help them to comply with their duties, in particular the duty to appoint competent designers and contractors; and the duty to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for managing the project;
- notify HSE about the project;
- co-ordinate design work, planning and other preparation for construction where relevant to health and safety;
- identify and collect the pre-construction information and advise the client if surveys need to be commissioned to fill significant gaps;

- promptly provide in a convenient form to those involved with the design of the structure; and to every contractor (including the principal contractor) who may be or has been appointed by the client, such parts of the pre-construction information which are relevant to each;
- manage the flow of health and safety information between clients, designers and contractors;
- advise the client on the suitability of the initial construction phase plan and the arrangements made to ensure that welfare facilities are on site from the start;
- co-ordinate the production or updating of a relevant, user friendly, health and safety file suitable for future use at the end of the construction phase.

Clients are responsible for appointing competent and adequately resourced designers and contractors (including Principal Contractors). Most clients, particularly those whose involvement with construction work is limited or non-existent, will not have the expertise necessary to assess the competency and resources of designers and contractors. We have this knowledge and expertise, and will assist clients with these assessments.

NOTIFICATION OF PROJECT TO HSE

We will have to make sure that the HSE office local to where the construction work is to take place is notified of the project if the construction work will last for 30 days or more or involve more than 500 person days.

MANAGING THE FLOW OF INFORMATION

Co-operation and co-ordination can only be achieved if there is good communication between all parties involved in a particular aspect of a project. During planning stages we need to make sure that there are appropriate systems in place to encourage communication and the sharing of relevant information, and we will manage the flow of information between the team members. We may need to convene special meetings if we are not satisfied there is sufficient co-operation between designers or with other team members, or if adequate regard is not being given to health and safety. However, it is better for these issues to be addressed in routine project meetings.

Clients must provide designers and contractors who may be bidding for the work (or who they intend to engage), with the project-specific health and safety information needed to identify hazards and risks associated with the design and construction work (The pre-construction information). For notifiable projects, clients are required to provide this information to the CDM Co-ordinator. We check the information to ensure that it is complete, advise the client if there are any significant gaps or defects, and ensure these are filled by commissioning surveys or by making other reasonable enquiries. We then provide designers or contractors who may be bidding for, or preparing to carry out construction work on site, with such parts of the pre-construction information that are relevant to each party.

ADVISING THE CLIENT ON THE ADEQUACY OF THE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Clients must make sure that there are suitable (project specific) arrangements for managing each project so that the work can be carried out safely and without risk to health. Most clients, particularly those who only occasionally commission construction work, will not be experts in the construction process and will not wish to become too involved with the day to day management decisions. The regulations do not require clients to take an active role in managing the work, but they do require clients to take reasonable steps to ensure that suitable management arrangements are in place throughout the life of the project.

We will assist with the development of these arrangements, and will advise clients on whether or not the arrangements are adequate. We will assist the Client with decisions about how much time the contractor will need in order to prepare before construction work begins. When advising and assisting the client, the following issues should be considered:

- a) Is the client aware of their duties and do they understand what is expected of them?
- b) Has the client prepared relevant information about the site?
- c) Have the necessary appointments been made, and has the project been notified?
- d) Is there an established project team who meet regularly to discuss and co-ordinate activities in relation to the project?
- e) Are project team members clear about their roles and responsibilities?
- f) Are there arrangements in place for co-ordinating design work and reviewing the design to ensure that the requirements in Regulation 11 are being addressed?
- g) Are there arrangements in place for dealing with late changes to the design, and for co-operating with contractors so that problems are shared?
- h) Has the principal contractor been given enough time to plan and prepare for the work, and mobilise for the start of the construction phase?
- i) Has the principal contractor made arrangements for providing welfare facilities on site from the outset, and have they prepared a construction phase plan that addresses the main risks during the early stages of construction?
- j) Are there suitable arrangements for developing the plan to cover risks that arise as the work progresses?
- k) Has the format for the health and safety file been agreed, and are arrangements in place for collecting the information which it will contain?
- l) Has the principal contractor put in place suitable arrangements for consulting with workers on site; for carrying out site induction and for ensuring that workers are adequately trained and supervised?

Not all of these questions will need answers at the start of the project, and the arrangements will need to evolve as the project develops. The key thing is to plan ahead so that arrangements are in place before the risks that need managing materialise on site.

CO-ORDINATING DESIGN WORK - DESIGN REVIEWS

Our legal responsibility in respect of design work only extends to health and safety aspects of the design – checking that the requirements of regulation 11 have been addressed and that the different design elements work together without causing danger. This is best achieved through design reviews during which health and safety issues are addressed alongside practicality and cost in a wider review of the design's buildability, maintainability and usability.

When considering buildability, meetings are, whenever possible, arranged to include the contractor so that difficulties associated with construction can be discussed and solutions agreed before the work begins. Discussing usability and maintainability, involving the client or those who will be responsible for operating the building or structure, means that proper consideration can be given to the health and safety of those who will maintain and use the structure once it has been completed.

Doing this during the design stage results in significant cost savings for the client, as rectifying mistakes after the structure has been built is always expensive.

As part of design reviews, we ensure that safe methods for construction work are identified, and that the designs include information needed by other designers and contractors to allow them to work safely and without risk to health.

The timing of the reviews are given careful consideration. Designs need to be far enough forward for people to have a clear view of what is in mind, but not so far on that it is too late to modify the proposals, if necessary. Design is an iterative process. It needs reviews at several different stages. The effort devoted to design reviews should be in proportion to the risks and complexity.

When we identify important health and safety issues that have not been addressed in the designs we draw them to the attention of the designers.

THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Design often continues throughout a project and we have a continuing role during the construction phase – ensuring that designers, including those engaged by a contractor and contractors who carry out design work themselves, co-operate with each other, and that the designs meet the requirements of the Regulations. Where design changes and decisions during the construction phase have significant health and safety implications, we liaise with the principal contractor about any implications for the construction phase plan.

The design of temporary works, such as falsework, formwork and scaffolding, falls within the scope of the regulations. We take reasonable steps to ensure co-operation between permanent and temporary works designers to ensure that designs are compatible and that the permanent works can support any loadings from temporary works.

We pay particular attention to late designs or late changes to designs. Examples would be revisions on architects' instructions, when clients require changes or when unforeseen problems are encountered on site. We make sure that there are arrangements in place to ensure that such changes do not result in significantly increased risks on site.

THE PREPARATION OF THE HEALTH & SAFETY FILE

We co-ordinate the preparation of a suitable health and safety file, or update it – if one already exists. We discuss this with the client in order that the format is agreed, along with who should provide what information and when. This requires the co-operation of a number of dutyholders. We therefore make sure that designers and contractors know, early on, what they will have to provide.

Clients need to provide appropriate requirements in contracts to ensure that the information is given to us immediately after relevant design or construction work is completed. At the end of a project we give the completed file to the client for safekeeping.

The Health and Safety File is a record of information for the client (and others who might be responsible for the structure in the future) of the key health and safety risks that have to be managed during any subsequent maintenance, repair or further construction work.

NOT INCLUDED IN OUR ROLE AS CDM CO-ORDINATOR

As CDM Co-ordinator for the project we are not required to include for the following:

- a) Approving the appointment of designers, principal contractors or contractors, although we normally advise clients about competence and resources;
- b) Approving or checking designs, although we have to be satisfied that the design process addresses the need to eliminate hazards and control risks;
- c) Approving the principal contractor's construction phase plan, although we have to be able to advise the client on its adequacy at the start of construction;
- d) Supervising the principal contractor's implementation of the construction phase plan – this is the principal contractor's responsibility; or
- e) Supervise or monitor construction work – this is also the principal contractor's responsibility.