

Health and Safety on your building site: Construction (Design and Management) (CDM) Regulations 2015

Many churches are unaware that they, as the client, are partially responsible for ensuring health and safety on site during building works.

This comes under the CDM Regulations 2015 which set out what people involved in construction work need to do to protect from harm themselves and anyone else the work affects.

CDM aims to improve health and safety of your building site by helping you to:

- sensibly plan the work so the risks involved are managed from start to finish
- have the right people for the right job at the right time
- cooperate and coordinate your work with others
- have the right information about the risks and how they are being managed
- communicate this information effectively to those who need to know
- consult and engage with workers about the risks and how they are being managed

All parties, from the client to the contractor (including architects, surveyors and consultants) have a legally binding role to play in this process.

The Regulations were first introduced in 1994 and revised again in 2007. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 came into force in Great Britain on 6 April 2015.

CDM regulations apply to any project that involves more than one contractor eg: an electrician and a stone mason. They only apply to construction work (ie: DIY and maintenance are not included).

This does include new build, but also renewing roofs and rainwater goods, stone repairs such as replacing worn stonework or repointing significant areas of brickwork etc.

A "principal designer" is charged with ensuring the regulations are implemented fully and correctly. (Under the 2007 regulations this role was undertaken by a CDM Co-ordinator). The reason for the change is to place more emphasis on project design and to ensure that H&S issues form an integral part of the design process.

The principal designer will need to have the relevant design skills and also be competent in H&S issues. It could be undertaken by an architect or a quantity surveyor, but they will have to fulfil the two roles.

So, for any project that falls within the CDM regulations, you must appoint a principal designer to manage Health and Safety issues on your behalf and to ensure that the principal contractor understands and fulfils his Health and Safety obligations.

Large firms of architects will have principal designers on staff, and their services will be provided as part of the package when you engage the architect. In many cases, though, you will be responsible for appointing someone from another firm. Your architect will be able to advise on this.

If you do not appoint a principal designer and make sure your contractor complies with Health and Safety requirements, then you or your project manager will be liable.

For clients, the big difference is that they have a legal responsibility which previously only rested with the appointed professionals.

You, as the client, are responsible for appointing suitably qualified people.

You are also obliged to:

- allow them sufficient time and resources to do their jobs properly
- make sure they actually do their jobs
- provide welfare facilities (generally toilets, a site cabin where they can eat meals and make teas and coffees and where a first aid kit should be kept). Usually, the contractor supplies these facilities but it is the client's responsibility to ensure this happens
- maintain and review the Health and Safety arrangements for the duration of the project
- provide pre-construction information to every contractor tendering for the work. Your principal designer should do this but you, as the client, are responsible for making sure he does
- ensure that your principal contractor provides a construction phase Health and Safety plan. Your principal designer should do this but you, as the client, are responsible for seeing that he does
- ensure that your principal contractor provides a Health and Safety file for you, the client, at the end of the job. Again, the principal designer should do this but it is the client's responsibility to make sure he does

The previous CDM regulations required most building jobs to be notified to the Health and Safety Executive.

Now, only those which last more than 30 days AND involve more than 20 workers on site at the same time OR projects taking more than 500 worker days have to be notified. The form is called an F10 and you, the client, will have to sign it, even if your principal designer completes it for you and submits it to the HSE.

You are responsible for ensuring that a copy is displayed in the site office which, for most projects, will mean the contractor's welfare hut.

CDM Regulations are overseen and regulated by the Health and Safety Executive and it is a criminal offence to disregard them.

The Health and Safety Executive publishes comprehensive information about managing a safe environment whilst you are having building work done, and particularly

The CDM Regulations 2015

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/Construction/cdm/2015/>

Summary of duties under Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/summary.htm>

The absolutely essential health and safety toolkit for the smaller construction contractor can be downloaded from the Health and Safety Executive website

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg344.htm>

Three more vital areas to check before works start on site:

Inform your buildings insurer:

If you intend to start major alterations, renovations or repairs, it is important that you inform your buildings insurer as soon as possible. They can then consider the effect the work will have on your policy and ensure that the correct cover is in place for the building works themselves.

Cover for theft of metal when scaffolding is to be erected:

The leading church insurer, Ecclesiastical, has recently made changes to how they approach this issue which we know is of concern to many places of worship. The presence of scaffolding on any building can seriously compromise general security. Because of this, Ecclesiastical church insurance policies normally exclude theft of external metal (mainly on roofs) when scaffolding is erected. However, cover can now be offered subject to various security conditions being met. Ecclesiastical have a detailed checklist of the technical requirements that need to be met on their website.

<http://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/churchguidance/churchsecurity/theftofmetal/scaffolding/>

Churches are advised to discuss this checklist with their contractor or architect before any work commences and get their assistant to complete it as the requirements can be much more easily accommodated at the planning stage.

Keeping people informed and involved:

Your congregation, friends and supporters will be keen to know what is happening during the building work phases of your project.

Share any updates and images from your architect, site manager or project manager.

However, DO NOT allow anyone access to any construction site without the site manager's express permission, attendance and without ensuring that the proper safety clothing is worn by all.

You can find more information about site safety, and direct other churches to this guidelines on the National Churches Trust website:

<http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/how-manage-your-project/site-safety>