



Contractors: roles and responsibilities

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015)

A contractor is anyone who directly employs or engages construction workers or manages construction work. Contractors include sub-contractors, any individual self-employed worker or business that carries out, manages or controls construction work. They must have the skills, knowledge, experience and, where relevant, the organisational capability to carry out the work safely and without risk to health.

Contractors and the [workers](#)^[133] under their control are most at risk of injury and ill health from construction work. Contractors therefore have an important role in planning, managing and monitoring their work to ensure any risks are controlled.

Contractors on **all projects** must:

- make sure the [client](#)^[134] is aware of the client duties under CDM 2015 before any work starts
- plan, manage and monitor all work carried out by themselves and their workers, taking into account the risks to anyone who might be affected by it (including members of the public) and the measures needed to protect them
- check that all workers they employ or appoint have the skills, knowledge, training and experience to carry out the work, or are in the process of obtaining them
- make sure that all workers under their control have a suitable, site-specific induction, unless this has already been provided by the [principal contractor](#)^[135]
- provide appropriate supervision, information and instructions to workers under their control
- ensure they do not start work on site unless reasonable steps have been taken to prevent unauthorised access
- ensure suitable welfare facilities are provided from the start for workers under their control, and maintain them throughout the work

In addition to the above responsibilities, contractors working on **projects involving more than one contractor** must:

- coordinate their work with the work of others in the project team
- comply with directions given by the [principal designer](#)^[136] or principal contractor
- comply with parts of the [construction phase plan \(PDF\)](#)^[137] relevant to their work

Where a contractor is **the only contractor working on a project**, they must ensure a [construction phase plan \(PDF\)](#)^[138] is drawn up before setting up the site.

When working as the only contractor for a [domestic client](#)^[139], the contractor takes on the client duties, as well as their own as contractor. However, this should involve them doing no more than they will normally do to comply with health and safety law.

Where a domestic project involves more than one contractor, the principal contractor normally takes on the client duties and the contractor will work to the principal contractor as 'client'. If the domestic client does not appoint a principal contractor, the role of the principal contractor must be carried out by the contractor as principal contractor and the client duties must be carried out by the contractor in control of the construction phase and the client duties must be carried out by the contractor as principal contractor. Alternatively, the domestic client can ask the principal designer to take on the client duties (although this must be confirmed in a written agreement) and the contractor must work to them as 'client' under CDM 2015.

Further guidance on who a contractor is; why they are important in ensuring construction work is carried out in a way that avoids harm; when their duties start; and what skills, knowledge and experience they need to carry out their duties in a way that ensures health and safety is available at [Are you a contractor?](#)^[140]

Resources

- ▶ [Managing health and safety in construction - L153](#)^[141]
- ▶ [A quick guide for clients on CDM 2015 - INDG411](#)^[142]
- ▶ [Construction Phase Plan \(CDM 2015\) - CIS80 \(PDF\)](#)^[143]
- ▶ [Notification of construction project \(F10\)](#)^[144]

See also

- ▶ [Legislation: CDM Regulations 2015](#)^[145]
- ▶ [CITB: CDM guidance and construction phase plan app](#)^[146]
- ▶ [Planning Portal: online planning application and building control information](#)^[147]

Related content

- ▶ [Working in Great Britain from overseas](#)^[148]
- ▶ [Safety bulletins](#)^[149]

Link URLs in this page

1. Construction
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/index.htm>
2. New to health and safety
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/new-health-safety.htm>
3. Safety topics Overview
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/index.htm>
4. Planning for construction work
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/planning.htm>
5. Site organisation Overview
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/siteorg.htm>
6. Site rules and induction
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