

CHURCH BUILDING PROJECTS AND SAFETY

Introduction

It is vital that building projects are conducted safely. Construction Health and Safety is governed by the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015. Detailed guidance on these regulations is available from the Guidance Section on the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) website at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/>.

The following guidance gives PCCs involved in building projects an overview of these regulations.

1. Small Works

For small works using a single contractor, you should:

- Be satisfied that your contractor has the necessary skills, experience and resources to undertake the work.
- Be satisfied that your contractor holds Public Liability Insurance.
- Ask your contractor to set out, in writing, his plan for managing the risks involved in the job. This is called a Construction Phase Plan and should set out how the contractor will manage health, safety and welfare. You may want to work together with your Contractor to prepare this.

2. Larger Projects

For larger works with multiple contractors, there are specific duties laid down by the Regulations. The PCC will be the *Client* under these Regulations and has the overall responsibility to make suitable arrangements for managing a project.

The key first step for the PCC is to discuss safety with your architect or surveyor at the earliest opportunity so that the PCC can put in place the arrangements and duty holders as CDM 2015 prescribes at the inception of a project.

The PCC is obliged to ensure management arrangements for safety are put in place but the Regulations recognise that the PCC as Client may know little about construction health and safety, so they are not expected to manage all these aspects themselves.

The primary way in which the PCC will meet its statutory obligations is to appoint, what the Regulations call, a *Principal Designer*. The principal designer is responsible for planning,

managing, monitoring and coordinating health and safety in the pre-construction phase of a project and liaises with the principal contractor to help in the planning, management and monitoring of the health and safety in the construction phase.

The Principal Designer will ask the PCC for information relating to health and safety issues and the PCC is obliged to provide it where they can do so. One of the most important pieces of information will be an up to date asbestos management report.

It is recommended that a member of the PCC's project team has a particular brief for safety issues and, whilst they need not be safety professionals, should be there to ask questions of the architect and contractor on issues of safety based on common sense and observation. Health and Safety should be a standing item at project meetings so that it is always considered at every step of the project.

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