

# Independent Guide

## Contractor Safety – why is it so important?



Independent workplace compliance

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires that employers make sure that contractors working on their behalf are competent and have an awareness of their health and safety responsibilities.

### Why is it so important?

Building contractors, and other contractors working on site, should have their own procedures for managing the health and safety aspects of their work. They should be able to demonstrate that they have knowledge of relevant health and safety law and have taken this into account in the pricing, planning and execution of work on any premises.

### What is a contractor?

A contractor is anyone you get in to work for you who is not an employee. Using contractors - for maintenance, repairs, installation, construction, demolition and many other jobs - may be routine in your company. But many accidents involve contractors working on site. Sometimes, you may have more than one contractor on site, you need to think about how their work may affect each other's and how they interact with your activities. Clearly, in these circumstances there is more chance of something being overlooked.

### Legislation

The legislation relating to contractors is plentiful but the principal ones are:

- Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSW) 1999;
- Construction (Design and Management) (CDM) Regulations 2015; and
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended).

These regulations have been made to prevent deaths and injuries caused each year in the workplace.

There are a lot of other regulations that will be specific to the tasks and services carried out by the contractor. These regulations provide the requirement to manage and control things like asbestos, substances, noise, manual handling, vibration and personal protective equipment.

### What do I need to do?

Simple checks you can do yourself are to request the following documents from contractors:

Insurance certificates	Previous and similar service examples	Competency statements
Risk assessments	Health and safety offences records	Accident records
Safe systems of work	Association memberships	

There are several organisations that qualify and vet contractors on your behalf for a subscription or service fee, however this forms just one step in controlling contractors on your premises.

It is important once you have selected contractors to communicate throughout the process and share information on your procedures. Once work has started you should check they are working safely to agreed scope and controls.

Higher risk activities such as working at heights, confined spaces, excavations, electrical work, hot works using flames, diving, working on gas and in dangerous environments can be managed with a permit to work system.

You can get more information from the HSE, Using Contractors - a brief guide (INDG368).

**This guide is of a general nature; specific advice can be obtained from Assurity Consulting. Assurity Consulting is the UK's leading independent compliance consultancy specialising in workplace health, safety and environmental solutions. We have over 30 years' experience of helping customers of all sizes, from across all sectors, manage their compliance responsibilities, making sure that their organisation is compliant, their employees are safe, their processes are cost effective and their management team is in control.**



### Assurity Consulting Limited

26 Redkirk Way Horsham West Sussex RH13 5QH  
t +44 (0)1403 269375 e info@assurityconsulting.co.uk  
w assurityconsulting.co.uk

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