

Management of Contractors

Introduction

Management of contractors – policy objective

The objective of this policy is to reduce the risk of accident and injury to staff and pupils within the school premises which could be caused by the activities of contractors. This will be achieved by school management controlling and managing the interface between school activities and contractors' work in such a way that the risk is reduced significantly.

A partnership between the Board, school and contractor will ensure that risk associated with this type of work is managed and controlled.

Control of minor works/maintenance of school premises

These activities can be carried out on a day-to-day basis and may in some cases be initiated by the school without recourse to the Board. Generally this will include works funded from the school's LMS budget and may therefore not be supervised by a Board Officer. Any work likely to involve any form of asbestos material is potentially hazardous. Reference should be made to the Board's Asbestos Management Policy and other associated guidance contained within this manual.

Those contracted to carry out minor works and maintenance should be on a Board approved list. Prior to starting any work on school premises the contractor must report to the school office and indicate the following:

- Production of an authorised form of ID, which should be worn at all times while on school premises;
- What work is to be carried out and where;
- How long it will last;
- How many persons and who will be involved;
- What are the significant risks involved;
- What precautions will be taken to control the risks;
- What precautionary steps must be taken by the school.

If the management of a school has any doubt as to the safety aspects of any work being carried out by contractors they should, in the first instance, express these concerns to the contractor with a view to eliminating the risk. If after this there is still concern about the risk, the Principal should remove staff and pupils from the area and consult the relevant Maintenance Officer, or Property Services staff, responsible for the work.

The Board's Health and Safety Adviser and where relevant, CCMS's Health and Safety Adviser, should be consulted where there is no resolution of a safety problem.

The following aide-memoire should be applied to ensure health and safety each time a contractor starts new work on school premises.

Aide memoire for school management to ensure the safe operation of controlled works

- Do I know the nature, scope, start date and duration of the works?
- Is there any relevant health and safety information I need to give to the contractors (e.g. fire alarms, play times, access needs, access to the school's Asbestos Register)?
- Will the contractor's vehicles and materials require access during time when playgrounds or entrance areas are congested with pupils? If so, can they be segregated from staff and pupils by timing or barriers, if not, what alternative arrangements can be made?
- Will the contractor's work create any of the following potential risks for staff and pupils?
 1. Objects falling from heights;
 2. Over-turning of mobile scaffolds or ladders;
 3. Materials obstructing passageways and fire escapes;
 4. Scaffolds, ladders, Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders, tools and plant being left unattended;
 5. Electrical leads passing through occupied areas;
 6. Excavations;
 7. Dust or fumes.

An example of poor practice



- If so, what precautions do the contractors intend to take in conjunction with the Board's representative? Precautions should be obtained in writing.
- Does the school need to take any complementary precautions within its own control to prevent danger to staff and pupils? Should announcements be made at assembly or should break and dinner time supervision be increased?
- What are the arrangements for the storage and transport of materials and waste? Are these likely to create any danger for staff or pupils?
- Do I know the name and telephone number of the person at the Board responsible for this contract as well as the principal contractor?

Control of major works contracts on school premises

While most of the responsibility for health and safety in relation to major works falls on the contractor, or the Board, the management of a school has an obligation to consider the health and safety of its staff and pupils in respect of this work.

The Principal should be made aware of the following:-

- The contractor's access/exit requirements from the street, both in general and with specific reference to vehicles delivering both the contractor's and sub-contractor's materials, equipment and personnel.
- The contractor's access/exit requirements to and within buildings.
- The contractor's proposals for the use of scaffolding (mobile and fixed), ladders and other access equipment, and the envisaged barrier and over head protection to be used.
- The contractor's proposals for separating the work areas from open access areas, including details on fencing, etc.
- The contractor's proposals for the positioning and fencing of skips and storage/compound areas, if separate from the working areas.
- Any dangerous, noxious or offensive substance or process to be used on site which might present a risk to health, safety or welfare of occupants and the contractor's proposals for protecting staff and pupils.
- The contractor's proposals for sanitary conveniences, services (e.g. telephone, water, electricity) and parking.



The principal and the Board representative and contractor should agree the following prior to the commencement of any work

- The requirement that visitors to the building works report their presence to the Principal's office. Notices should be posted to this effect.
- The times and locations that mobile scaffolds will be used and the protection that will be afforded. The times when other hazardous works may or may not be undertaken, e.g. trenching, lifting operations, asphaltting, use of chemicals, etc. The contractor should provide detailed procedures for undertaking these activities (e.g. restricted hours of working, storage, protection, etc.).

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- School fire assembly points, means of escape and access to fire fighting equipment cannot be compromised during the construction phase.
- Procedures for the contractor's liaison officer or site supervisor to notify the Principal of future specific works **including contract details**.

The contractor should confirm, at the earliest possible stage, that any guidance for protecting staff and pupils has been read and understood by himself/herself and the site supervisor. Any disagreements on interpretation should be resolved at this time.

The contractor is responsible for briefing his/her own employees and sub-contractors on the contents of any such guidance. It is important that this is carried out.

Guidance concerning safeworking practice for contractors working in schools

The physical standards that need to be achieved during building work in occupied education premises, for the protection of staff and pupils, can be found in the Health and Safety Commission, Education Service Advisory Committee publication "Building Contracts Undertaken on Education Premises - Strategies for the Health and Safety of Staff and Pupils". This is available from the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (NI) 1995 (CDM)

Schools should be aware of the quite specific criteria, which must be adhered to in order to ensure full compliance with the CDM Regulations. In brief, the completion of a comprehensive health and safety file and the appointment of a Planning Supervisor is an integral part of the Regulations. Under the CDM Regulations five key parties have specific duties:

- The client: who should be satisfied that only competent people are appointed as planning supervisor and principal contractor.
- The designer: who should ensure, as much as they can, that structures are designed to avoid or where this is not possible, to minimize risks to health and safety while they are being built and maintained.
- The planning supervisor: who has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the health and safety aspects of the design and planning phase and for the early stages of the health and safety plan and the health and safety file.
- The principal contractor: who should take account of the health and safety issues when preparing and presenting tenders or similar documents. The principal contractor also has to develop the health and safety plan and to co-ordinate the activities of all contractors to ensure that they comply with health and safety legislation.
- Contractors and the self-employed: who should co-operate with the principal contractor and provide relevant information on the health and safety risks created by their work and how they will be controlled.