



Health and Safety for Your Building

Introduction

All community groups need to treat health and safety issues as their top priority when they are undertaking improvement work to their buildings. This factsheet provides an introduction to Health and Safety issues and how they apply to community building projects.

Health and Safety Responsibilities of Groups

The health and safety of everyone using or visiting a building should always be the first concern of the community group which manages the building. When a group is planning to undertake any work on its building it must satisfy itself that the builders and architects (if any) involved are competent people. If an architect is involved he or she must ensure that any health and safety issues are minimised at the planning stage. All the builders involved and their workers must consider health and safety issues and plan their work to control these issues and minimise risks.

What Should Groups Do?

Groups undertaking improvement work on their buildings should discuss health and safety with whoever prepares the plans and drawings. They should ask this person (who in many cases will be their architectural advisor) to consider health and safety risks and plan for them as far as possible from the outset. The group should also discuss health and safety issues with their builder, in particular how they will manage the work on site in as safe a way as possible. This should include consideration of whether any community activities will continue in the building or whether it will be vacated until the work is done. If any activities do continue the group should ensure that everyone involved is aware of any health and safety issues and what they should do to avoid risks. This might include considering issues such as keeping the site clean and tidy, with clear space for people to work in; or keeping people, including the public, away from danger.

CDM (Construction, Design and Management) Regulations

The CDM Regulations are about health and safety issues and construction projects. The regulations do not apply to all projects. Building projects lasting more than 30 days in total must be notified to the Health and Safety Executive. Many small projects will not take 30 days actual working on site (days when the builder is not on site are not counted). Where the group and builder agree that the job will take less than 30 days on site there is no requirement to notify the Health and Safety Executive. If the job will take more than 30 days on site then the group must ensure that a CDM Co-ordinator (often called a Planning Supervisor) is appointed and that the Health and Safety Executive is notified by this person before the work begins on site.

The Planning Supervisor will need to prepare a pre-tender Health and Safety Plan and liaise with the builder before work begins. The builder then prepares a Health and Safety Plan on how any risks will be addressed and how the work will be undertaken as safely as possible.

This factsheet is only an introduction to the regulations. It is not a guide to a client's responsibilities for health and safety and compliance with CDM regulations. **The Health and Safety Executive** provides advice and has guides available to the regulations. The contact details are:

Health and Safety Executive
86 Ladas Drive
BELFAST BT6 9FR
Telephone - 028 9024 3249
Website - www.hesni.gov.uk

The Health and Safety Executive guide is called 'CDM Regulations – how the regulations affect you'.

Infoline is the Health and Safety Executive's public enquiry contact centre. Infoline provides access to workplace health and safety information, guidance and expert advice.

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