

Property maintenance

If you are doing major alteration or refurbishment of your premises you, staff, contractors, customers and the public can be put at risk. These risks require identification and control.

Safety point	Why?	How do you do this?
<p>Before doing any works to your premises you need to be certain what your responsibilities are for protecting the health and safety of people who could be affected now or in the future.</p> <p>The person requiring/paying for work to be done is known as the 'CLIENT'.</p>	<p>Careful planning can avoid accidents and liabilities in the future. For example, where asbestos is concerned this could be over 30 years ahead (see below).</p> <p>You must register certain construction works with the Health and Safety Executive otherwise you could be prosecuted.</p>	<p>Will the work take more than 30 days from start to finish Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Will it be more than 500 person days of work (i.e. 10 men working for 50 days) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If either question is yes, then you must appoint a 'Construction Design Management Co-ordinator' who is responsible for notifying the HSE on a F10 form before the work starts. DESIGNERS e.g. architect, PRINCIPAL CONTRACTORS and CONTRACTORS also need to be identified.</p> <p>If you answer 'no' to both then the job is not notifiable but the following still applies in general law.</p>
Plan the work that you want done	Many accidents are caused by a lack of planning e.g. falls from height caused by using the wrong equipment	Consider what you want done and how you want it to be done, what equipment will be required and who you are going to get to quote for the work. Discuss this with contractors that you are getting in to quote for the work.
Check whether any asbestos is involved.	Asbestos is a known health risk that is still present in many buildings and is dangerous if disturbed e.g. by refurbishment works.	The person responsible for the building has a 'duty to manage' any asbestos containing materials and, if present, provided an asbestos management plan that you can refer to. You have a duty to inform all contractors of any asbestos in the building before they start work.
Identify the hazards and manage the risks involved	Building and repair work can change risks or introduce new hazards that could injure people for which you may be held responsible.	Carry out a risk assessment for the work and ensure that any contractors you employ do the same. Decide what information, instruction and training is required to be provided to each group at risk e.g. employees, customers, contractors. Consider the priority areas of working at height, manual handling, workplace transport and slips trips and falls. Blank risk assessment sheets are in the pack. Record any plans and agreements to deal with risks with contractors.

Safety point	Why?	How do you do this?
Select the right contractor and ensure their competency	Accidents can be caused by contractors not knowing what the rules are.	<p>You must be satisfied that contractors are competent (i.e. they have sufficient skills and knowledge) to do the job safely and without risks to health and safety. The degree of competence required will depend on the work to be done. You could for example ask prospective contractors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What experience they have in the type of work you want done • What their health and safety policies and practices are • About their health and safety performance (number of accidents etc) • What qualifications and skills they have • Their selection procedure for sub-contractors • For their safety method statement • What health and safety training and supervision they provide • Their arrangements for consulting their workforce • If they have any independent assessment of their competence • If they are members of a relevant trade or professional body; or • Whether they or their employees hold a 'passport' in health and safety training. This is a growing trend in construction. <p>Make sure they know and understand what performance you expect. Explain your health and safety arrangements to them, show them your procedures and health and safety policy statement and make sure they understand and act in accordance with it.</p>
Ensure the correct selection of any sub-contractors	Sub-contractors can introduce unforeseen risks as they may not be aware of site safety rules	The selection of sub-contractors is probably best left to the contractor. However you must be sure that a contractor has an effective procedure for appraising the competence of a sub-contractor e.g. by using the same criteria listed above that you do
Supervise the work being done	Sometimes the people arriving to do the work are different to those who planned it and they decide to do things differently e.g. to save time. This can lead to accidents.	Hopefully by doing the above you will have a clear understanding of what you are paying for when employing a contractor to do work. Check that you are getting what was agreed both in quality and the methods used – look out for any shortcuts that could become accidents.
If in doubt get advice	In order to know whether something is right or wrong you need to know what's right in the first place.	Accept the extent of your knowledge – get advice if you need it from someone who knows about the subject e.g. a CDM coordinator, through the HSE Infoline or your local Council.