

CDM 2007 – works in progress



One year on, work still needs to be done to instil the new CDM 2007 (Construction, Design and Management) Regulations in the minds of employers and individuals across the construction industry, says Kevin Fear, Head of Health, Safety and the Environment at ConstructionSkills

Although the HSE (Health & Safety Executive) is working hard to penetrate those in the industry who are still unaware of the changes to the revised CDM Regulations, it's very difficult at this early stage to measure its success, particularly as the construction industry is so vast.

The CDM Regulations, which came into force on April 6 2007, aim to help those in the industry better integrate health and safety into the management of their projects through better planning and the appointment of a CDM Co-ordinator. Clients without construction expertise should rely on the CDM Co-ordinator's advice on how best to meet their duties, but

the CDM Co-ordinator will need the client's support and input to be able to carry out his or her work effectively.

A recent survey showed that 25% of SMEs in the construction industry believed that CDM Regulations did not apply to them. The hardest sector to reach is the domestic building sector. Due to the lack of a corporate client influence, it's far easier for contractors and designers to ignore the requirements of the new CDM Regulations. It's certainly the case that domestic clients do not have any duties under CDM 2007 as do corporate clients, which means they don't need to appoint a CDM co-ordinator or Principal Contractor. The survey results suggest that quite a high number designers

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and contractors working in the domestic market are not aware of their responsibilities, which are outlined in the Approved Code of Practice (ACoP), established by the HSE and the Industry drafted CDM Guidance Documents that are freely available from www.cskills.org/cdm.

Unrealistic deadlines and a failure to allocate sufficient resources are two of the largest contributors to poor control on-site. The new CDM Regulations have meant that commercial clients have needed to, by legal obligation, assign an adequate amount of time to the planning stages of a project and the setting up of a site, including allowing their assigned designers and contractors the time to carry out a thorough risk





◀ assessment before the project starts.

The process of changing attitudes and getting the client to acknowledge that more responsibility now lies with them will be a long one. Indeed, it is not unknown for the HSE to find some companies who are still not abiding by the 1974 Health & Safety at Work Act, which, for example, states that any firm employing more than five people must have a Health & Safety policy.

ConstructionSkills anticipates it could take as long as five-to-

ten years before the group of companies currently either unaware of CDM 2007 or being deliberately negligent will move towards the attitude of 'tell me what I need to do to be compliant'.

Changing attitudes and behaviours to comply with the new CDM regulations are a work in progress, and what we see at the current time are the green shoots of what we hope to achieve, which is an industry standard that we can each rely on, whether we're a client, a training provider, a designer or a construction

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company. It's too early to outline where improvements have been made, however, much is going on behind the scenes to highlight the impact that the CDM Regulations will make.

For more information about CDM Regulations, visit www.cskills.org/publications or speak to ConstructionSkills on 0870 077 7248.