

Construction Site Safety Inspections

Construction is one of the most dangerous industries in the United Kingdom. Nearly 50 workers were killed on the job from 2011 to 2012, and more than 2800 injuries were reported in the same year.

In February and March 2013, the HSE conducted over 2300 unannounced inspections at construction sites across the United Kingdom as part of a month-long initiative to reduce death, injury and ill health at the workplace. Though the vast majority of sites the HSE inspected were obeying the law, almost one-fifth of them failed their inspections, and the HSE issued over 600 enforcement notices.

HSE inspectors have the right to enter worksites without prior notice, although many will give notice where appropriate. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are prepared when inspectors come.

What to Expect During an Inspection

Generally, inspectors will look at the worksite and its activities, how you are managing health and safety and whether you are complying with health and safety laws. Inspectors may also talk with workers and take photographs and samples. Some may offer guidance or advice. If there is a problem with health and safety, inspectors may serve enforcement notices.

What Inspectors Look For

The following are examples of risk management that inspectors look for at construction sites.

General risk management

- Agree on risk control measures with contractors and subcontractors.
- Communicate the agreed-upon risk control measures to the workforce.

- Ensure equipment has been correctly installed and/or assembled.
- Inspect equipment regularly and arrange maintenance as necessary.

Working at height

- Follow the Work at Height Regulations hierarchy, which includes avoiding work at height where possible and using work equipment or other

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measures to minimise the distances and prevent negative results of a fall when work at height cannot be avoided.

- Take proper precautions, such as edge protection on scaffolding.
- Make sure ladders, if used, are the correct type, in good condition, set on firm, level ground, properly secured and set at the correct length and angle for the job.

Housekeeping

- Keep walkways, stairs and work areas clear of debris and other obstructions.
- Store materials safely in a place where they are out of the way.
- Ensure walkways are even, and gritted if icy.

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Welfare facilities

- Keep facilities warm, well-lit and well-ventilated.
- Provide a place to change, dry and store clothing.
- Provide clean and working toilets, soap, towels and washbasins with hot and cold running water.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Provide appropriate PPE to workers, including hard hats, ear protectors, masks and gloves.
- Ensure PPE is in good condition.
- Ensure that your workers are wearing and using PPE correctly.

The HSE provides additional inspection guidance on its website, www.hse.gov.uk. For more information about complying with health and safety law and preparing for inspections, contact Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd today.