



# Your Guide To Health & Safety For Self-Managed Projects

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## Introduction

It is well-known that construction is one of the most dangerous industries in the UK with thousands of injuries and on average over 50 fatalities on construction sites every year.

It may not always appear from the outsiders point of view, but the construction industry is heavily regulated to keep the safety and protection of it's workers at an optimum level.

Health & Safety Law should not discourage people from undertaking their own projects, however, if applicable, it is key that they are aware of the regulations in force so they can ensure they are compliant and will maximise the safety of their workers whilst on site.

***In this guide, we'll aim to take you through:***

- The potential risks involved
- The regulations in place and how they may affect your project and
- What additional steps you can take the reduce the risks on your site.



## Statistics

### Accidents and Injuries

Each year on average...

- 80,000 Workers suffer work-related ill health
- 30 Fatal injuries to workers
- 64,000 Non-fatal injuries to workers

### Fines

- In 2015, new sentencing guidelines were implemented causing the annual total of fines to increase from around £40M per annum to £70M per annum based on the 2016 figures.
- 38 Cases in 2016 were fines in excess of £500,000.
- 9,495 Enforcement notices issued in 2016.

### Definition HSE Notices

HSE issue enforcement notices to companies and individuals for breaches of health and safety law. The notice may involve one or more instances when the recipient has failed to comply with health and safety law - each one of these is called a "breach" and can result in various sanctions being imposed.

\*Statistics and information from [www.hse.gov.uk/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/)

# Does Health & Safety Apply To You?

Self builders will have duties under workplace health and safety law if...

1. They intend to sell the property on completion, in which case they would be considered to be a Developer
2. The self builder directly employs (even if only temporarily), workers to build the property
3. They choose to manage the project on site, taking on contractors to do the work

*The self builder who takes on the 'project management' role would have duties to ensure:*

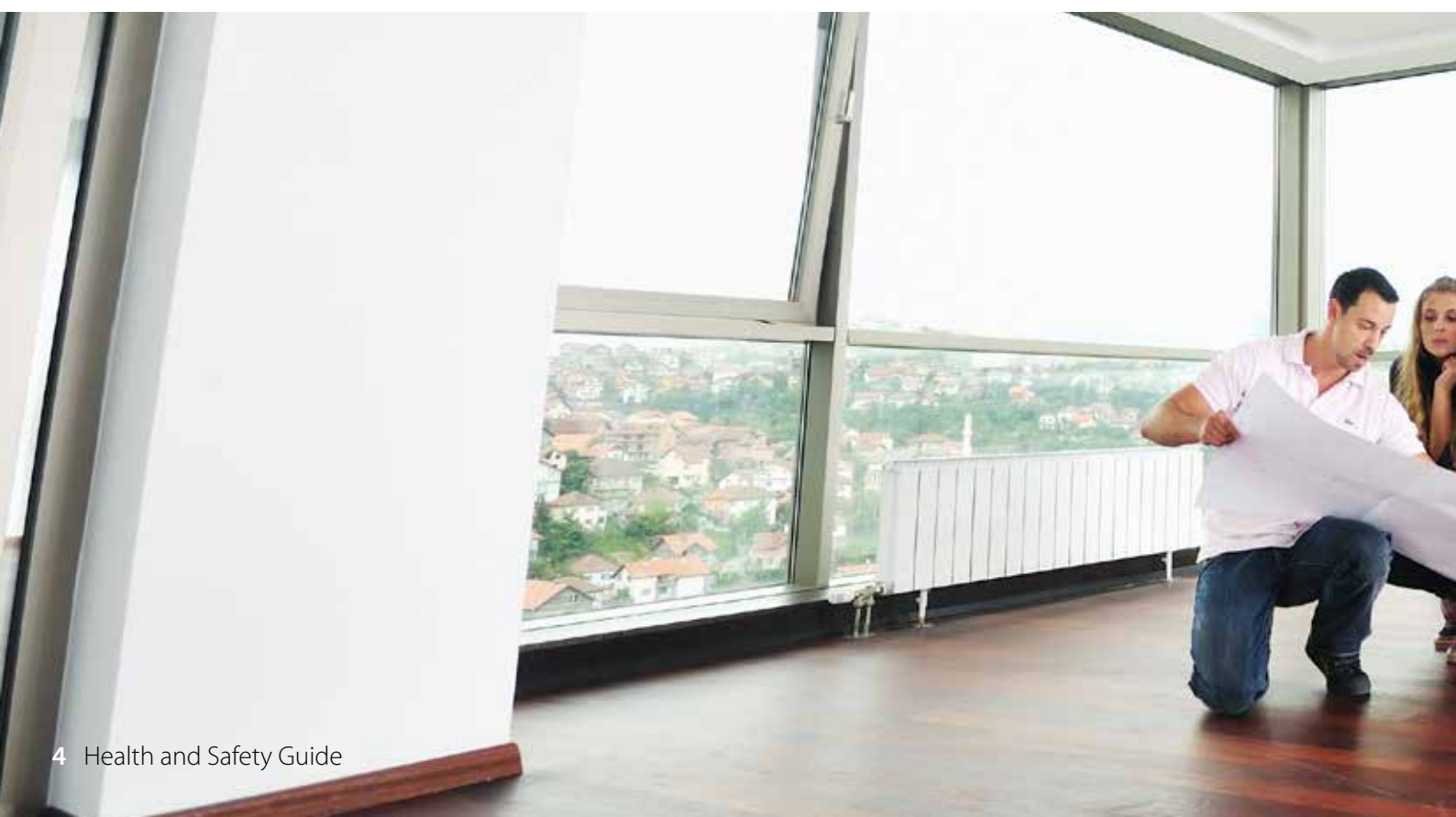
- Health and safety risks are properly controlled throughout the project
- Activities are coordinated to ensure the work is done safely
- Contractors they appoint are competent to do the work safely, and
- Those working on site co-operate with each other.

## Who are they?

### The Health & Safety Executive

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) is the body responsible for the encouragement, regulation and enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare, and for research into occupational risks in Great Britain.

Practical guidance on how to manage a construction site and control the risks that arise from construction work can be found on the HSE Website at [www.hse.gov.uk/construction](http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction)





## Description of Project

Work Entirely by Self-Builder  
(No additional labour)

Self-managed with own direct labour  
and/or sub-contractors

Watertight shell by a main contractor  
with a self-managed finish

“Turn-key” project or main contractor  
managed through-out

## When Health & Safety Laws Apply

Only applies if property is to be sold

Health & Safety applies as the labour is under  
their guidance

Health & Safety applies when the shell is complete and  
the self-builder takes on the site management

The Health & Safety will not apply to the self-builder

## Important Note

### Employers Liability

Not only do self-builders need to consider health & safety laws when choosing to self-manage their project, they also need to consider whether there is an element of Employers Liability cover required. Employers Liability cover will be required where labourers are brought on site and are under their direct instruction.

The self-builder will effectively have responsibility for the site and if the direct labour are injured due to the site or equipment being unsafe then they would be entitled to claim against the self-builder for damages and compensation.



# CDM Regulations

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM) place duties on all those in the construction supply chain including the client, designers and contractors.

Many of the regulations only apply to those who carry out the work as part of a business, however, some of the regulations also apply to anyone who has control over the way in which construction work is carried out and this will include self builders in some situations.

*The self builder who takes on the project management role would have duties to ensure:*

- Health and safety risks are properly controlled throughout the project
- Activities are coordinated to ensure the work is done safely
- Contractors they appoint are competent to do the work safely, and
- Those working on site co-operate with each other.

# Fire Prevention

Fire can break out on most construction sites. Even with the right Insurance cover, Fires can be devastating and destroy projects and plans.

*Some of the simple Fire Prevention tips are:*

- **Hot Works** - Follow clear rules for hot work such as welding. Formal permit-to-work systems are often appropriate. Make sure extinguishers are at hand and that sparks or heat cannot set fire to surrounding materials.
- **Combustible Materials** - Ensure waste is cleared away regularly and avoid any unnecessary stockpiling of materials. Limiting what is onsite is a great way to prevent larger incidents. Avoid burning any waste materials on site wherever possible.
- **Smoking** - Smoking must be strictly prohibited on site as per the HSE regulations. Signage should be displayed and you must ensure everyone abides.
- **LPG Cylinders** - LPG cylinders should be properly stored in an outside building away from any flammable material. They must be turned off when not in use and, if possible, give them ventilation so if it leaked they cannot fill an enclosed area with gas.
- **Protection Systems** - When incorporating fire detection and alarm systems, roof vents and other “fire stopping works” into the project, these should be completed, where possible, prior to the fitting out of fixtures and fittings.
- **Removing Tools** - Any tools being powered by the supply should be unplugged when not in use, and at the end of the working day, removed from the building or if this is not possible they should be placed in a secure room and/or cabinet.
- **Battery Packs** - Any battery packs should not be left on charge when the building is unoccupied. Battery packs can generate a substantial amount of heat and in some instances have been the cause of fires, especially with Lithium batteries. It is also recommended that when work ceases batteries are disconnected from tools and stored in a secure room and/or cabinet.
- **PAT Testing** - Contractors Power tools should be PAT Tested (Portable Appliance Testing) and documentary evidence of this should be kept by the Contractor.



## Interesting Fact

There are around 11 construction fires every day. As you read this publication there is probably a fire on a construction site. Not only can people be killed or injured, but fires can also be financially devastating to those involved..

Remember..

These guidelines are only as useful as the quality of their implementation. It is key for the site workers to follow them to ensure the risks are minimised.



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