

### 1. Background

Occupiers and employers must by law ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees and visitors including contractors and in the event of an accident may be held jointly or vicariously liable for the actions of these persons. Contractors (including sub-contractors and suppliers) should therefore be assessed for competence and commitment to health and safety prior to engagement.

### 2. Contractor's Questionnaire

We recommend that you should prepare a written questionnaire for issue to all contractors to be completed as part of your selection and approval procedure. This should seek information and supporting documentation covering (but not exclusively) the following:

- a. How long the contractor has been trading and undertaking the work in question. Can they provide examples of their work and/or references?
- b. Membership of any trade and/or health and safety bodies
- c. Any third party approvals/certifications/accreditations
- d. Legal authorisation/licensing (as required for work on gas installations, with asbestos, etc)
- e. Any terms of business which limit the contractor's and/or increase your own liabilities
- f. Health and safety policy, risk assessments and method statements
- g. Permit-to-work systems
- h. Application of the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations
- i. Personnel qualifications/training/experience
- j. Who is the contractor's competent person to assist with health and safety compliance as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations?
- k. Management and supervision arrangements
- l. Communication arrangements
- m. Monitoring and auditing arrangements
- n. Control of access to work areas
- o. Maintenance and statutory inspection records for work equipment - electrical appliances, lifting equipment, pressure systems, etc
- p. Occupational health hazards and associated controls - hazardous substances, noise, etc

- q. Fire hazards and controls - heat/sparks/flames, flammable and explosive liquids and gases, temporary shutdown of fire detection/suppression systems, fire plan, etc
- r. Environmental considerations - permissible and potential adverse emissions, controls, monitoring, emergency plan, etc
- s. Accident reporting, recording and investigation procedures
- t. Contractor's safety record - statistics, incidents reported under RIDDOR, previous enforcement action/prosecution
- u. Insurance arrangements - employer's, public and products liabilities and (if appropriate) professional indemnity. Are covers appropriate and indemnity limits adequate?

Any contractor should provide similar information for each sub-contractor they may intend to use.

The extent of your questionnaire should reflect the size of the contract and nature of work to be undertaken and consider associated hazards and risks. The questionnaire should be completed and signed by an authorised senior person for the contractor and returned with all supporting documentation for appraisal by a competent person within or acting for your organisation.

### **3. Contractor's Rules**

Contractors working on your premises should be issued with written instructions in accordance with your own health and safety systems and any specific rules put into place for the work to be undertaken.

It may also be appropriate to introduce a site induction procedure for contractors to include instruction in workplace hazard awareness and associated safety rules, authorised and restricted areas and activities, emergency procedures, accident reporting, first aid arrangements, etc.

Communication of your contractor's rules and any site induction should be provided to all personnel on a signed receipt basis.

The use of a signing in/out and visitor/contractor badge system should also be considered.

### **4. Approved Contractors List**

The creation of an approved contractors list will reduce the work involved where the same individuals or companies are used regularly.

### **5. Further Guidance**

Further guidance on the selection and control of contractors is contained in the Health & Safety Executive publication INDG268 'Working together: Guidance on health and safety for contractors and suppliers' available free of charge from HSE Books - telephone (01787) 881165/web site [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk) - or as a download from [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg268.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg268.pdf).

## **6. Contact Us**

For further details of our health and safety consultancy services and how these can benefit your organisation please contact us:

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