

RICS PROFESSIONAL STANDARD



# Surveying safely

Global

2nd edition, November 2018

Effective from February 2019

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## Published by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

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London

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Produced by the RICS Health & Safety Advisory Group.

This document was originally published as Surveying safely: health and safety principles for property professionals in November 2018 as an RICS guidance note and was reissued in July 2023 as an RICS professional standard.

ISBN 978 1 78321 495 2

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Typeset using Typefi.

# Acknowledgements

This professional standard was produced by the RICS Health & Safety Advisory Group. RICS would like to express its thanks to the following:

**Chair:** Anthony Taylor (GVA)

Ian Watson FRICS (CDM Services)

Anthony Baker (A&T Consultants Ltd)

James Bridgland (Phase Consultants Ltd)

Rob Elvin (Squire Patton Boggs)

Alan Cripps FRICS (RICS)

Jeffrey Tribich (Malcolm Hollis LLP)

Caroline Brown (Acoura)

Mike Appleby (Fisher Scoggins Waters LLP)

Special thanks to Helen Ratcliffe from the HSE for her input.

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# RICS standards framework

RICS' standards setting is governed and overseen by the Standards and Regulation Board (SRB). The SRB's aims are to operate in the public interest, and to develop the technical and ethical competence of the profession and its ability to deliver ethical practice to high standards globally.

The [RICS Rules of Conduct](#) set high-level professional requirements for the global chartered surveying profession. These are supported by more detailed standards and information relating to professional conduct and technical competency.

The SRB focuses on the conduct and competence of RICS members, to set standards that are proportionate, in the public interest and based on risk. Its approach is to foster a supportive atmosphere that encourages a strong, diverse, inclusive, effective and sustainable surveying profession.

As well as developing its own standards, RICS works collaboratively with other bodies at a national and international level to develop documents relevant to professional practice, such as cross-sector guidance, codes and standards. The application of these collaborative documents by RICS members will be defined either within the document itself or in associated RICS-published documents.

## Document definitions

Document type	Definition
RICS professional standards	<p><b>Set requirements or expectations for RICS members and regulated firms about how they provide services or the outcomes of their actions.</b></p> <p>RICS professional standards are principles-based and focused on outcomes and good practice. Any requirements included set a baseline expectation for competent delivery or ethical behaviour.</p> <p>They include practices and behaviours intended to protect clients and other stakeholders, as well as ensuring their reasonable expectations of ethics, integrity, technical competence and diligence are met. Members must comply with an RICS professional standard. They may include:</p> <p>mandatory requirements, which use the word 'must' and must be complied with, and/or</p> <p>recommended best practice, which uses the word 'should'. It is recognised that there may be acceptable alternatives to best practice that achieve the same or a better outcome.</p> <p>In regulatory or disciplinary proceedings, RICS will take into account relevant professional standards when deciding whether an RICS member or regulated firm acted appropriately and with reasonable competence. It is also likely that during any legal proceedings a judge, adjudicator or equivalent will take RICS professional standards into account.</p>
RICS practice information	<p><b>Information to support the practice, knowledge and performance of RICS members and regulated firms, and the demand for professional services.</b></p> <p>Practice information includes definitions, processes, toolkits, checklists, insights, research and technical information or advice. It also includes documents that aim to provide common benchmarks or approaches across a sector to help build efficient and consistent practice.</p> <p>This information is not mandatory and does not set requirements for RICS members or make explicit recommendations.</p>



# Glossary

Term	Definition
ACM	Asbestos-containing material
ACoP	Approved code of practice
BOHS	British Occupational Hygiene Society
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
CDM	<i>Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015</i>
C&GLI	City and Guilds of London Institute
dB(A)	Noise levels (decibels)
GP	General practitioner
HSWA	<i>Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974</i>
IoD	Institute of Directors
MEWP	Mobile elevated working platform
MSDs	Musculoskeletal disorders
PPE	Personal protective equipment
RF	Radio frequency
RoSPA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
RSI	Repetitive strain injury
SPF	Sun protection factor
ULDs	Upper limb disorders

# Introduction

This professional standard sets out basic, good practice principles for the management of health and safety for RICS-regulated firms and RICS members. RICS members also need to consider the legal jurisdiction in the country where they work.

This document is for RICS members and other professionals who are involved with the property industry.

It sets out principles for health and safety practices for those engaged in the built environment as property professionals and includes health and safety responsibilities:

- at a corporate level (whether the RICS-regulated firm is large or small) and
- at the level of the individual RICS member.

It covers property-related businesses and identifies the moral, ethical and practical issues that confront RICS-regulated firms and RICS members everywhere, in all the work that they undertake.

Appropriate management of health and safety is a requirement for all RICS-regulated firms and RICS members, including property-related businesses. The requirement for such management has been put in place in many countries across the globe and across industry sectors and governmental organisations in order to protect individuals (which includes both employees and the general public) from harm. Such harm, when it does occur, is a very personal matter (as in consequences to the injured and those responsible), whether it affects an individual or many people. RICS members should recognise and accept their individual responsibilities to manage and control health and safety related risks.

The consequences of not meeting individual and corporate responsibilities can also have a devastating effect on the way that an individual is perceived by managers, colleagues, family and friends, as well as detracting from the reputation of the organisation as a whole.

This RICS professional standard is effective from February 2019.

# 1 Personal responsibilities for RICS members and corporate responsibilities for RICS-regulated firms

## 1.1 Influencing factors

At an international level it is important to consider health and safety cultural differences and whether the prevailing judicial system is prescriptive or self-regulatory. Prescriptive systems set precise requirements that need to be followed in order to comply with health and safety law, whereas self-regulatory systems set general requirements, leaving the details and practicalities of achieving compliance to each RICS-regulated firm and RICS member. In particular, consideration should be given to how compliance with the law will be judged in the event that judgement becomes necessary; for example, following an accident or near miss, or after the serving of an enforcement authority notice for a perceived breach of the law.

Where an RICS-regulated firm or RICS member is unsure of their legal obligations they should seek advice from a competent person with knowledge of local health and safety law before undertaking activities, setting goals or strategies, or starting a project. Such consultation should, in any event, be considered as part of a comprehensive risk-management process.

Health and safety responsibilities should include potential liabilities relating to both civil and criminal law as relevant in the jurisdiction. The potential financial consequences of personal injury and the RICS-regulated firm's or RICS member's response to obligations affects how insurance underwriters view the risk they are asked to insure; that is, it may affect the level of insurance premium and the extent of cover.

Regardless of size, all RICS-regulated firms have a responsibility to put in place the framework rules within which their employees are to operate. RICS-regulated firms should inform employees of the rules, policies and procedures and support them in carrying them out. It is the individual's responsibility to act within these rules and to act responsibly for the health and safety of themselves and others.

RICS-regulated firms should consider complying with recognised health and safety management system standards, such as those set out in [ISO 45001 Occupational health and safety](#).

The health and safety management system within an RICS-regulated firm should interact with and complement any other management systems in place, for example, *ISO 14001 Environmental management*, *ISO 9001 Quality management*, or any integrated or enterprise risk-management system.

## 1.2 Personal responsibilities

Individuals employed by RICS-regulated firms have a direct responsibility to ensure that corporate health and safety policies and procedures are practised effectively and competently. It is therefore essential that individuals have the necessary skills, knowledge, training and experience to carry out these tasks.

When individuals encounter or anticipate an activity, task or procedure that may lead to the harm of people, property or the environment, practicalities necessitate that the responsibility to act appropriately remains with the individuals directly concerned.

Risk assessment does not imply that every risk or event can be foreseen, but it is the first step towards minimising potentially dangerous events and putting in place appropriate risk controls. Sometimes, however, events overtake planning; these situations will have to be addressed by those immediately affected by them.

An individual's ability to deal with and respond appropriately to an incident will come from competence (skills, knowledge and experience) and the availability of clear information. Therefore, it is important that individuals are adequately prepared to deal with and respond to the circumstances they are likely to encounter. Individuals should also be prepared to recognise when matters are beyond their competence (skills, knowledge and experience).

Individuals are responsible for knowing and understanding the health and safety risks appropriate to the tasks they undertake. This knowledge may be gained through:

- appropriate training
- keeping up to date with relevant information and
- personal experience

which all contribute to ongoing competence. Individuals within an RICS-regulated firm are obliged to maintain competence levels appropriate to their tasks.

Generally, the more senior position an individual has in an RICS-regulated firm, the greater their responsibility becomes to those under their supervision – whether employees or other people who could be affected by the work that is being undertaken. A court may place health and safety responsibility on senior management in direct proportion to the extent of their operational role: the broader their operational role, the greater their responsibility. Therefore, it is essential that those who supervise, manage, or provide information, instruction or training to others also have adequate competence (skills, knowledge and experience), and the ability to recognise when matters are beyond their capabilities.

### 1.3 'Safe person' concept

RICS considers the concept of a 'safe person' to mean that each individual assumes individual behavioural responsibility for their own, their colleagues' and others' health and safety while at work.

The purpose of health and safety is to minimise the risk of harm; it is not necessary for somebody to have an injury, suffer ill health or a near miss for the risk of harm to be apparent.

RICS-regulated firms are obliged to ensure the health, safety and welfare of people at work by providing, monitoring and maintaining:

- a safe working environment
- safe work equipment
- safe systems of work and
- competent staff.

While RICS-regulated firms will expect to achieve this within low-risk environments, field work could well be performed in a working environment that is constantly changing and can potentially be, or become, hazardous. The objective of the safe person is to ensure that:

- the individuals who work in all environments, including those presenting potentially higher risks, are safe and remain healthy at all times and
- the individuals concerned accept the prime responsibility for their own well-being.

This requires placing greater emphasis on ensuring the competence of individuals, including their responsibility to ensure the use of safe work equipment and safe systems of work for themselves and others.

There are two aspects to this: organisational responsibility and individual responsibility.

Organisational responsibilities include:

- **selection:** everyone having, or being capable of developing, the job skills and competence to meet the demands of their work activities
- **training:** including providing knowledge about the potential hazards in a working environment
- **information:** providing staff with information about the risks and control measures associated with their working environment. This information may be generic in nature or it may relate to specific sites
- **equipment:** providing staff with equipment that is suitable for the purposes for which it is intended, and everyone understanding its use and limitations
- **safe systems of work:** these ensure that work activities are undertaken safely

- **instruction:** individuals must receive clear instructions, and receive supervision and expert support where necessary, relating to:
  - the work activities required
  - the operation of any equipment and
  - appropriate safe systems of work.
- **supervision:** supporting staff with clearly defined lines of communication and
- **personal protective equipment (PPE):** providing individuals with appropriate personal protective equipment that meets appropriate specifications.

Individual responsibilities include:

- **performance:** being competent to perform their work safely (including understanding the limits of their competence (skills, knowledge and experience))
- **control:** being able and prepared to work within accepted or designated systems of work
- **adaptability:** being able to recognise and adapt to changing circumstances at all times
- **vigilance:** remaining vigilant, at all times, for their own safety and that of colleagues and others
- **awareness:** being able to recognise their own abilities and limitations and
- **teamwork:** being an effective member of a team.

While the RICS-regulated firm may be expected to provide information, instruction, policies, procedures, training and other support, the nature of RICS members' work means they could be exposed to environments and working practices that dynamically change from day to day and site to site.

RICS members cannot be complacent, regardless of whether they have been undertaking the same type of work in the same type of place for many years – things change, not least an individual's perception of risk, which changes with age, experience and with accommodation to the individual's working environment. When considering risk, it is most important to consider the perceptions of the people at risk; for example, younger versus older; cultural differences; physical ability; and experienced versus inexperienced.

RICS members are exposed to a diverse range of business opportunities and activities; with these comes the responsibility to manage health and safety. Individuals who neglect these responsibilities can be a danger to themselves and others.

Primary accountability for health and safety rests with those who face the practicalities of daily business. Their responsibilities include:

- accepting their individual obligations and personal role in addressing health and safety risk management and their responsibility to abide by corporate and legal requirements

- cooperation with their employer to minimise risk to the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and all others potentially affected by the activities they undertake and to assist their employees to comply with employer duties
- sharing with others who may be affected by their work activities, health and safety matters, and in particular any risks to health and safety, and safe methods of working to minimise or eliminate the risks
- reporting, in good time where possible, any breaches of health and safety rules and regulations
- reporting, in good time, any actual, potential or perceived health and safety risks to those best placed to address them
- taking the time to address the management of health and safety within the area of their experience and competence and within the remit of their management responsibilities and
- maintaining adequate and appropriate competence in regard to health and safety matters associated with their activities at work.

## 1.4 Corporate responsibilities

RICS-regulated firms should have in place a management process designed to identify foreseeable risks and should put in place means to reduce these risks to acceptable levels such that the tasks, activities, objectives and goals of the RICS-regulated firm can be fulfilled successfully and safely.

The management process should include a recognised line management structure to manage and monitor health and safety and to have in place policies and procedures appropriate to the RICS-regulated firm's business activities. These should ensure that individuals (both employees and others who could be affected by the activities undertaken by, or on behalf of, the RICS-regulated firm) are free from risk or, if the risk cannot be eliminated, that it is understood, managed and minimised.

Some of these policies and procedures may be required by particular laws under particular jurisdictions; others may be corporate policies designed to achieve specific corporate aims and objectives and meet particular expectations. It is important to note that RICS-regulated firms and individuals that operate outside their normal 'home' country (e.g. remote workers overseas) need to abide by the rules and regulations in the host country, and that other cultures may have different customs and may seek to achieve similar health and safety goals by employing alternative techniques within different legal structures.

The responsibilities of RICS-regulated firms need to include allowing enough time and other resources so their employees and others for whom they have responsibility (legally, morally and ethically) can effectively manage risks to health and safety. Matters to consider include:

- time pressures
- distraction/interruptions

- fatigue
- inexperience/lack of knowledge and
- complacency.

Effective ways of working in a healthy and safe manner should be led from the top and in accordance with legal guidance. It is generally accepted that the director, partner or business leaders, or whoever has ultimate responsibility for the management of the RICS-regulated firm, takes responsibility for the safety and health of all those affected by the firm's undertakings. This is often expressed by way of a health and safety 'policy statement' that sets down the RICS-regulated firm's health and safety management objectives and arrangements. This policy statement should be supplemented with a clear description of the management system, accountability structure, and clarity of roles and responsibilities for all employees throughout the RICS-regulated firm, often called the 'general', or 'management' arrangements for health and safety.

The RICS-regulated firm's responsibility for the management of health and safety also extends up and down the supply chain. When working for clients or customers, the RICS-regulated firm needs to ensure that it understands, and can comply with, client and customer health and safety requirements. Similarly, if the RICS-regulated firm seeks to contract, subcontract or enter into any business arrangements with others, it is incumbent upon all parties to ensure that each understands and can comply with the others' health and safety rules and management systems. This should include the provision of the following:

- corporate structures to manage health and safety
- clear lines of accountability for the management of health and safety
- policies and procedures appropriate to the work undertaken
- identification and management of foreseeable risks
- training and information in regard to the management of health and safety
- processes to manage contractors, procurement of/provision of services from/to others and
- appropriate insurances (which may include casualty insurance, known in the UK as employer's liability and public liability insurance).

## 1.5 In the event that it 'all goes wrong'

Occasionally, when something does go badly wrong and people are harmed, the injuries or ill health can have life-changing consequences for the individuals involved, their family and friends. Such events also have the potential to affect the organisation significantly, including reputation and morale, and may have legal consequences.

Additionally, and importantly, is the possible effect on the injured party's colleagues and acquaintances in their working environment, whether or not they had any direct influence



on the event itself. Those responsible may potentially have feelings of guilt, as well as facing internal disciplinary action and, in some cases, criminal and/or civil legal proceedings.

It is important that incidents and accidents are investigated appropriately by a competent investigator. Incidents that cause or could have caused significant injury to persons or damage to property should be properly investigated. The root cause, or causes, should be determined and action taken to prevent a recurrence. Where appropriate, any learning points should be passed on to others. Local enforcement authorities may also require that certain incidents or accidents are reported and may decide to investigate the incident in order to establish whether an offence has been committed, with a view to prosecuting individuals, the organisation or both. In such circumstances it is recommended that appropriate legal advice be sought at the earliest opportunity.

It is worth considering seeking the advice of local enforcement authorities proactively before an incident occurs, to gain advice and clarity on legislation or recognised best practice before implementing safe methods of working.

## 2 Relevance to RICS professional groups

While this professional standard is specifically designed to provide general guidance to RICS-regulated firms and RICS members in regard to carrying out their work activities safely, there are many varied, and potentially highly dangerous, risks to health and safety associated with specific professional disciplines and working environments.

The RICS professional disciplines listed here all have specific risks that require appropriate assessment and development of safe working methods to mitigate them. Where appropriate, activity-specific information and advice on risk control, specific specialist training and site information and advice should be sought from the employing client, RICS professional groups and local enforcement agencies. Where appropriate it may be necessary to employ third-party health and safety experts to advise on local rules, laws and customs, particularly in regard to high hazard and risk environments or work activities requiring specific technical health and safety (or environmental) competence.

Further guidance is available from the RICS professional groups; visit the [RICS website](#) and contact the professional groups to access detailed information on matters relating to specific disciplines.

Whichever professional discipline you work in, it is imperative to ensure that those providing health and safety advice or instruction have the relevant subject knowledge, skill and experience and are appropriately competent to do so.

RICS' professional groups are:

- building control
- building surveying
- commercial property
- dispute resolution
- environment
- facilities management
- geomatics
- machinery and business assets
- management consultancy
- minerals and waste
- personal property/arts and antiques

- planning and development
- project management
- quantity surveying and construction
- residential property
- rural
- valuation.

# 3 Assessing hazards and risks

## 3.1 Risk management

Risk management is undertaken all the time both by businesses (in assessing threats to their successful operation) and individuals in their daily life at home as well as their place of work. Individuals need to take personal ownership for managing health and safety risks.

Business risk management includes financial risk, reputation risk, change management, and project risk management as well as operational risk-management disciplines such as environmental matters, contractor procurement and control of health and safety.

Fundamentally, risk management means taking adequate time to fully consider how any plan of action could deviate from what you expect. Remember that plans can turn out better than expected as well as going wrong, therefore risk management should also seek to identify opportunities for any potential benefits.

However, this subsection concentrates on the identification, prioritisation and management of downside health and safety-related risks that have the potential to harm people or property.

It is imperative that RICS members have a level of competence sufficient to enable them to take personal ownership for managing the health and safety risks for which they are responsible.

'Competence' is often defined as having sufficient knowledge, experience and ability to carry out duties in relation to specific tasks, the risks that those tasks entail, recognising one's limitations and taking appropriate action in order to prevent harm to those carrying out the tasks or those who may be affected.

When considering what could go wrong with an activity, potential problems should be identified and plans made and/or control measures introduced to best reduce the chances of a problem occurring, and eliminate, minimise or, at the very least, reduce the consequences if a problem presents itself.

In this section, guidance is also provided on the concepts of risk management and how these may be applied to health and safety in the workplace. See chapter 1 for an outline of the responsibilities that RICS-regulated firms have to their staff (and others who could be affected by their undertakings) and the responsibilities individuals have to manage health and safety risks to themselves and others.

## 3.2 Concepts of managing risk

As already mentioned, risk is not necessarily a bad thing as businesses have to take risks to achieve their objectives, just as individuals do in order to achieve theirs. The important issue is that both businesses and individuals need to know what risks they are exposing themselves to. Once the risks (positive or negative) have been identified they can be measured, prioritised and managed appropriately.

It is very important to ensure any significant risks are recognised and separated from less significant ones so that major issues requiring management are not lost in a 'fog' of minor matters.

It is also important to recognise that every person's perspective of risk is different. There are numerous reasons for these differences; for instance, they could be as a result of age, physical ability, cultural differences or simply differences in an individual's life experience. A place of work or work activity that is well understood by one person (who is fully trained and competent) may be highly dangerous to another person who is unfamiliar with the hazards and safe methods of achieving the task.

## 3.3 Working safely as an RICS-regulated firm and an RICS member

Exposure to risk changes as circumstances change. Some of the work undertaken by RICS members is relatively low risk and can be conducted in a familiar office environment; for instance, preparing briefing documents, specifications, reports and drawings. It is important to remember, however, that just sitting for extended periods at a desk in front of a computer can cause health problems if the work equipment is not appropriately adjusted and adequate breaks are not taken.

If the work takes RICS members out of their office the risks may increase. For instance, the majority of inspections (where work can be carried out without needing to access roofs or enter roof spaces, riser ducts or confined spaces) are likely to remain relatively low risk. However, if it is necessary to use ladders, enter restricted areas (such as roofs, scaffolds, plant rooms or confined spaces) or the work is on a remote rural or construction site, or perhaps a site under the control of a client or customer, the inherent risk will increase.

If an RICS member is required to visit premises or construction sites (including refurbishment and demolition), they could be:

- exposed to excess noise or vibration
- exposed to toxic/hazardous materials
- required to drive for extended periods
- lone working
- working close to vehicles

- working close to fast-flowing/deep water or
- working in any number of other environments where the likelihood of risk and consequences of harm could increase substantially.

### 3.4 Assessing risk

When assessing the potential for risks with negative outcomes, the assessment should start with taking sufficient time to identify all the inherent risks; that is, what are all the (significant) issues that could cause harm to people or property, assuming there are no controls in place?

Controls can be as simple as adequate and appropriate training and wearing appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment), as a last resort, in lower-risk environments. However, as the risks increase so will the measures required to control them in order to eliminate or minimise the risk to an acceptable level.

Risk assessment is defined as carefully examining what in your work could cause harm to people, so that you can judge whether or not you have taken enough precautions to prevent harm.

For the purposes of this document, and with regard to occupational health and safety, risk assessment involves the management of two key concepts: hazard and risk.

A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm to someone. The harm could be an injury or ill health. Risk is the likelihood (whether high or low) of the harm being realised. Importantly, risk increases as the severity, likelihood or number of people affected by the harm increases. Note that if a risk is not categorised as 'low', it could be deemed to be 'higher risk'; this does not necessarily mean 'high risk' – just higher than 'low'.

Simple guidance for risk assessment in regard to occupational health and safety is outlined in many publications, but can be summarised as:

- 1 identify the hazards
- 2 decide who might be harmed and how
- 3 evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- 4 record the findings and implement them
- 5 review the assessment and update if necessary and
- 6 advise all those affected of the outcome of the assessment and methods of work, or other control measures necessary, to minimise or eliminate risk.

### 3.5 Hierarchy of risk control

Risks should be reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority. Table 1 sets out a recognised order to follow when planning

to reduce risk from work activities. In order to reduce (or eliminate) the risk, consider the headings in the order shown; do not simply jump to the easiest control measure to implement.

Order	Action	Description
1	<b>Elimination</b>	Redesign the activity or substitute a substance so that the hazard is removed or eliminated. For example, avoid working at height where the work could be undertaken by alternative means (e.g. using a drone for roof inspections).
2	<b>Substitution</b>	Replace the materials used or the proposed work process with a less hazardous one. For example, use pre-prepared components rather than fabricating/cutting on site. Take care to ensure that the alternative is safer than the original.
3	<b>Engineering controls</b>	Use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where you cannot avoid working at height. Install or use additional machinery such as local exhaust ventilation to control risks from dust or fumes. Separate the hazard from operators by methods such as enclosing or guarding dangerous items of machinery/equipment. Give priority to measures that protect collectively over individual measures.
4	<b>Administrative controls</b>	These are all about identifying and implementing the procedures needed to work safely. For example, reducing the need for lone working or ensuring the work is completed in daylight; reducing the time workers are exposed to hazards (e.g. by job rotation); prohibiting use of mobile phones in hazardous areas; increasing safety signage; and performing more detailed risk assessments.
5	<b>Personal protective clothes and equipment</b>	Only after all the previous measures have been tried and found ineffective in controlling risks to a reasonably practicable level must personal protective equipment (PPE) be used. For example, where you cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall (should one occur); and provide emergency alarms (and 'buddy' systems) where lone working cannot be avoided. If chosen, PPE should be selected and fitted by the person who uses it. Workers must be trained in the function and limitation of each item of PPE.

Table 1: Risk control hierarchy

Source: Table 1 is adapted from HSE, [Management of risk when planning work](#)

### 3.6 Dynamic risk assessment

Whatever efforts have been made to evaluate and mitigate risks, the situation 'on the day' may have changed, sometimes significantly changing the risk(s), hazard(s) or the potential consequences.

The last chance to assess the risks is immediately prior to undertaking the work activity, or indeed while in the process of actually undertaking the work and as the working environment is changing – this is commonly called dynamic risk assessment.

It is recommended, particularly in higher-risk environments, that personnel are trained to understand and undertake dynamic risk assessment. This is not necessarily complicated; it effectively requires the worker to continually re-evaluate the work, the working environment, and the competence of themselves and others to continue with the work activity. For example, before embarking on the planned activity, continually re-evaluate:

- Is the activity still safe to continue?
- Is the working environment still safe for the activity to continue?
- Are all those working still within their limit of competence (skills, knowledge and experience)? If not, they should assume the authority to remove themselves and their colleagues from danger.
- Are there appropriate control measures in place?
- Can everyone still get to a place of safety in an emergency?

This does not need to be written down; however, it is advisable to record or maintain a log of what was done, and why, after completing the work activity.

If for whatever reason the situation becomes too dangerous, be prepared to make the area as safe as possible and quickly retire to a place of safety before reconsidering how to continue safely.

### 3.7 Evaluating risk

There are as many methods for measuring risk as there are people and businesses trying to do so. Each RICS-regulated firm will have its own way of undertaking a risk assessment and, where appropriate, recording them. Similarly, there are many ways of ensuring everyone who could be affected by the risk(s) are advised of them and are trained on how to undertake the work safely (often called a 'safe method of working' or 'method statement').

It is imperative that all risk assessments be undertaken by a competent person (i.e. those with appropriate qualifications, skills and experience).

This professional standard therefore seeks to illustrate a process and methodology rather than give prescriptive rules. Each RICS-regulated firm and RICS member needs to consider how to assess risks in their workplace in a way that is appropriate to the firm, and the risks to which it is exposed. Much detailed guidance is published on assessments of risks,



and the sophistication necessary to remain within the law will differ from organisation to organisation and jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

It is also important to remember that it will be necessary to develop different assessment tools/templates in order to successfully address the wide range of risks any organisation may be presented with.

A different technique (and expertise) is necessary to address, for example, fire risk as opposed to manual handling or handling of chemicals; generic risk assessments obviously differ from task-/activity-specific risk assessments. There may also be specific requirements in law in regard to elements of risk that need to be assessed in some circumstances (see Figure 1 for a model to assist in the risk assessment process).

It is worth considering what level of sophistication is appropriate for the RICS-regulated firm to ensure the information gained from the process is put into practice rather than being lost in too much paperwork. It is good practice (and will be guided by the assessment itself) to review the process on a regular basis and, as is the case for all management systems, implement a strategy of continuous improvement.

Measurement of risk can be by either quantitative or qualitative evaluation, or in some cases by both. There is no single method to undertake risk assessment as there are no fixed rules about how a risk assessment should be carried out. However, it is important to ensure that the method chosen provides the most straightforward way for your organisation and does not lose the important, significant information in a mass of irrelevant data and paperwork.

To undertake health and safety risk assessment you need to understand what in your business might cause harm to people and decide whether you are doing enough to prevent that harm. Once you have decided that, you need to identify and prioritise putting in place appropriate and sensible control measures.

The risk assessment process should involve:

- identifying what can harm people in your workplace
- identifying who might be harmed and how
- evaluating the risks and deciding on the appropriate controls, taking into account the controls you already have in place
- recording your risk assessment and
- reviewing and updating your assessment.

As part of the risk assessment process also give thought to:

- the effect of strategic decisions, such as corporate policies or procedure
- common (generic) issues such as manual handling, slips and trips

In this model different parts of activity may be at a different point, assumption is this is done by competent people

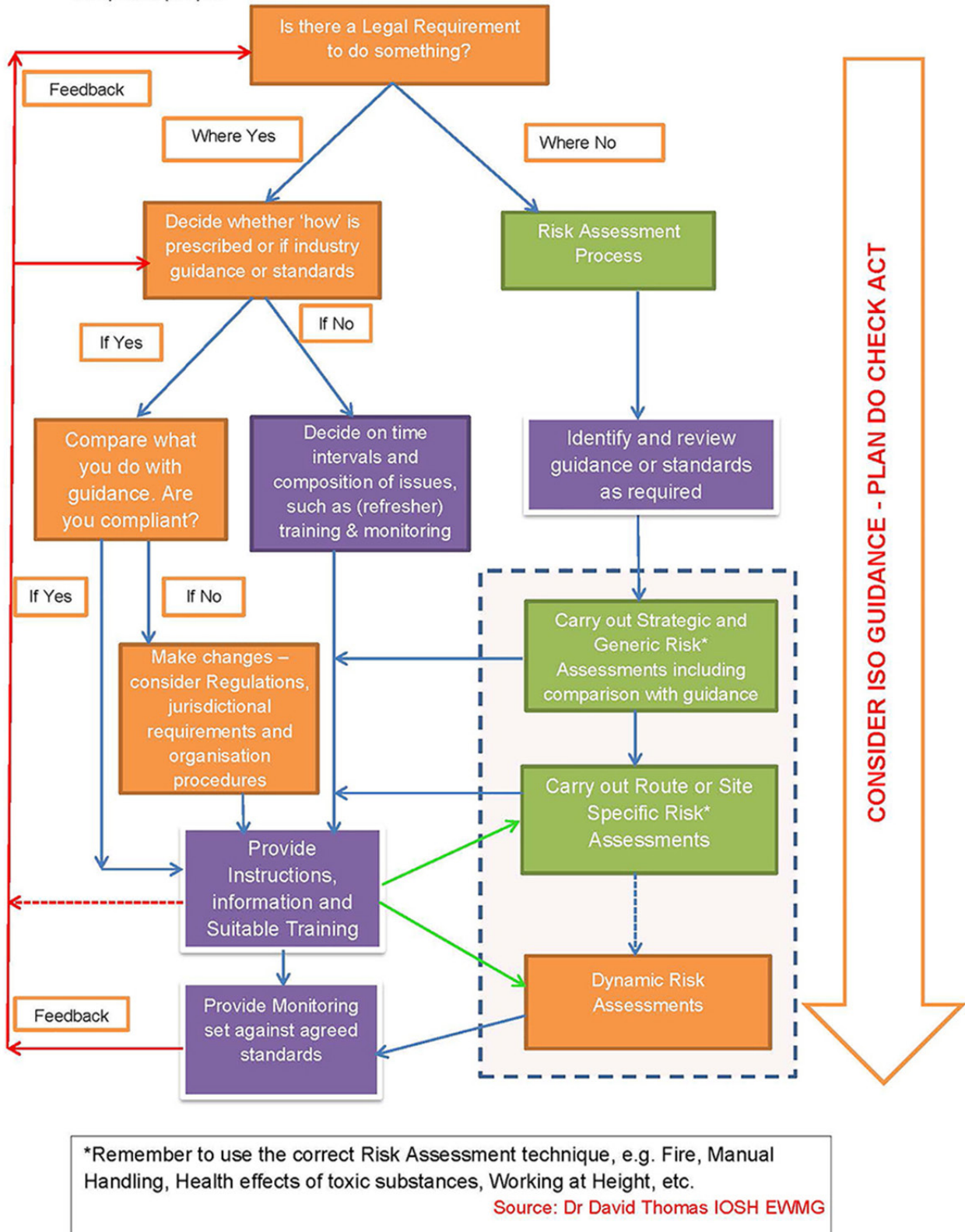


Figure 1: Health and safety risk assessment process

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- specific hazards related to the activity, task or location, (perhaps, if appropriate, weather or temperature conditions) and
- employees (and others') capabilities and their potential reaction to changing (dynamic) conditions.

As noted, there are many different ways to undertake risk assessment; a simple template is set out in Table 2.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Slips and trips	Staff and visitors may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on	General good housekeeping is carried out. All areas well lit, including stairs. No trailing leads or cables. Staff keep work areas clear, e.g. no boxes left in walkways, deliveries stored immediately.	Better housekeeping in staff kitchen.  Arrange for loose carpet tile on second floor to be repaired/ replaced.	All staff,	From now on.  Day/ month/ year	Day/ month/ year  Day/ month/ year

Table 2: Example of simple risk assessment

Different risks require their own type of risk assessment, such as the following (by no means exhaustive) list of illustrative examples:

- Working at height.
- First aid.
- Fire safety.

- Use of mobile and desktop work equipment, including technology tools.
- Substances and chemicals.
- Manual handling and MSDs.
- Work-related stress.
- Asbestos.
- Management of water systems.
- Use of lifting equipment and work machinery.
- Driving at work and management of transport systems.

It is vital that you choose the correct method to assess your risks. Where there is no acceptable process available, some organisations choose to use risk matrices. They can be used to help work out the level of risk associated with a particular issue. They do this by categorising the likelihood of harm and the potential severity of the harm. This is then plotted in a matrix (see Figure 2 for an example). The risk level determines which risks should be tackled first.

Using a matrix can be helpful for prioritising your actions to control a risk. It is suitable for many assessments but in particular for more complex situations. However, it does require expertise and experience to judge the likelihood of harm accurately. Getting this wrong could result in applying unnecessary control measures or failing to take important ones.

Figure 2 is an example of a simple risk assessment matrix that illustrates how a risk may be given a relative value by multiplying the values on the vertical and horizontal axes. Please note it is the responsibility of each RICS-regulated firm to define and provide guidance on what is meant by high, medium and low on both axes.

As a general guide:

- any risk with an assessment value of 9 needs to be eliminated or reduced
- risk assessment values of 4 to 6 also needs to be reduced
- risk assessment values of 2 or 3 can have control measures implemented, with information provided to those at risk and
- a risk assessment value of 1 is not normally considered to be significant.

Severity of outcome ↑	High	3	3	6	9
	Medium	2	2	4	6
	Low	1	1	2	3
			1	2	3
			Low	Medium	High
		Likelihood of occurrence →			

Figure 2: Example of a simple risk assessment matrix

Figure 3 illustrates a slightly more complex risk assessment matrix.

Severity of outcome ↑	Multiple fatality	5	5	10	15	20	25
	Single fatality	4	4	8	12	16	20
	Significant injury (multiple)	3	3	6	9	12	15
	Significant injury (single)	2	2	4	6	8	10
	Minor injury	1	1	2	3	4	5
			1	2	3	4	5
			Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely	Certain
		Likelihood of occurrence →					

Figure 3: Example of a more complex risk assessment matrix

In Figure 3, as a general guide:

- any risk with an assessment value of 12 to 25 has to be eliminated or reduced
- risk assessment values of 6 to 10 should also be reduced
- risk assessment values of 3 to 5 should have control measures implemented, with information provided to those at risk and
- risk assessment values of 1 and 2 are not normally considered to be significant.

There are many different variations of these matrices and the general guide on the interpretation of the risk assessment value is subjective. Different competent persons will each have their own view on the risk assessment values and appropriate control measures.

Not all organisations attempt to place a value on individual risks, instead choosing to simply identify the risks in a qualitative manner and establish whether (and what) control(s) are required to reduce it to an acceptable level or remove it altogether. This may be achieved by reviewing the risks and deciding that anything that is not low risk is simply a higher risk; organisations often choose to divide into low, medium or high risk. This qualitative approach is illustrated in Figure 4.

Note that high impact/low frequency risks should be properly considered and mitigated against.

Remember – the aim of a risk assessment is to identify whether you are doing things in the most appropriate manner. The results will inform, for instance, what changes you need to make, what information and training is required, whether health surveillance is needed and what supervision is necessary.

Some RICS-regulated firms choose to combine a subjective evaluation with a scoring technique, thereby adding more definitive prioritisation. Depending on the approach taken it may be advantageous to take expert advice to initiate a process appropriate to the RICS-regulated firm's business undertakings.

It is important not to allow significant risks to be lost among trivial matters. Although this depends on the particular circumstances being assessed, the intention of risk assessment is to identify significant risks and either eliminate or control them, not to create a risk-free environment.

Unless the work/task is deemed very low risk it is likely that a written risk assessment may be required, especially where it is necessary to advise others. Note, however, that the more significant the risk exposure, the more detail and sophistication of assessment and development of safe working practices (which may include a permit system) will be necessary.

RICS members of all disciplines should consult with appropriately qualified health and safety professionals regarding the adequacy of and methodology for undertaking risk assessment within their RICS-regulated firms.

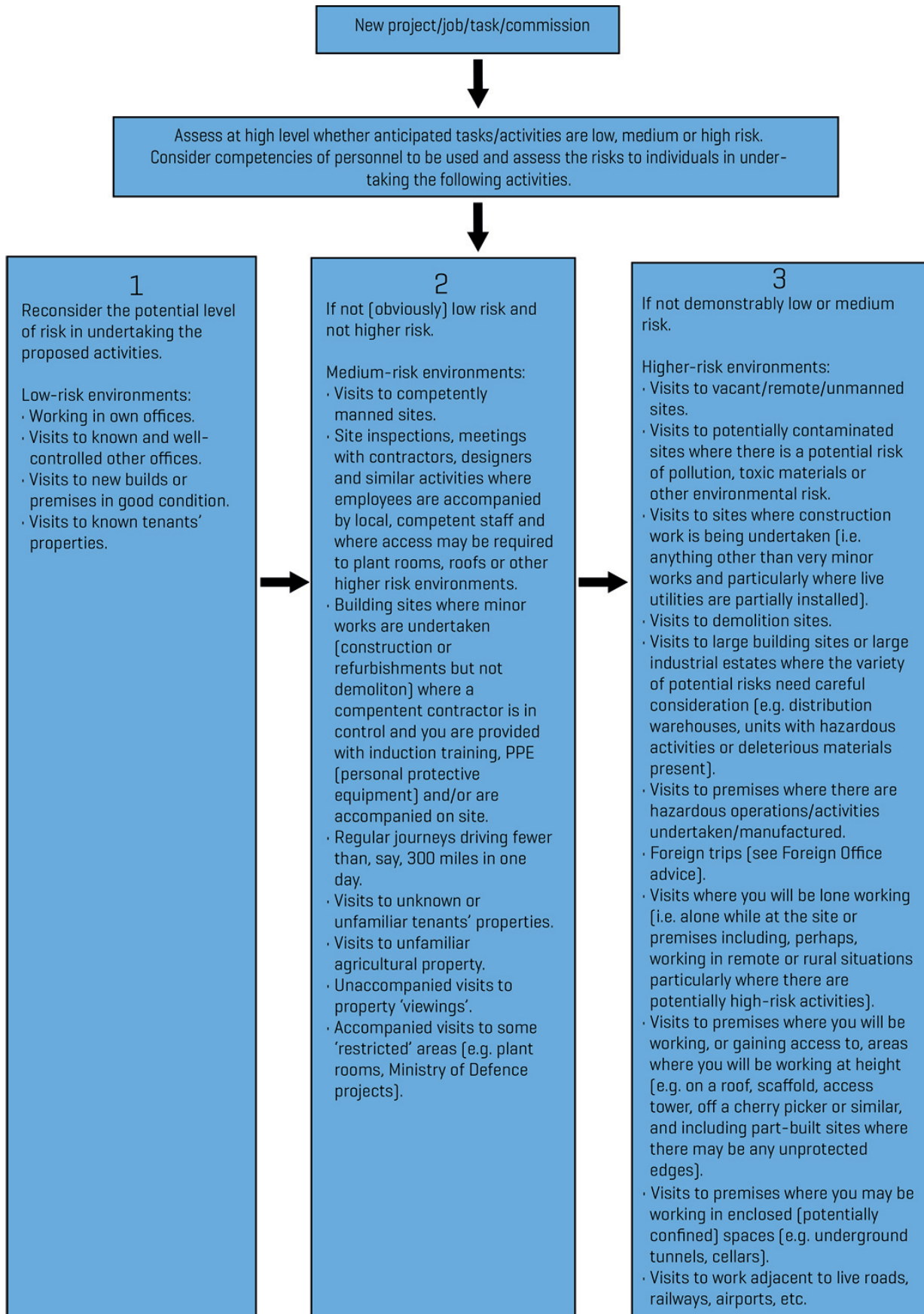


Figure 4: Illustrative guidance for categories of risk using a qualitative approach

# 4 RICS members' places of work

## 4.1 General

RICS members undertake a variety of work, tasks and activities in a broad range of locations, so it is not possible to provide prescriptive guidance as to what health and safety-related provisions should be implemented in every place of work.

A 'place of work' is a physical location where general work-related activity is undertaken, as opposed to a 'workplace' which, for the purposes of this document, is defined as the actual point where the work is executed (e.g. a desk, a plant room, a confined space, or a visit to a premises or construction site).

While much work undertaken by many RICS members may take place in a relatively low-risk environment, such as an office, the extent of many RICS members' professional interests extend beyond the office. Their place of work may include locations that present differing levels of health and safety risk, for example, at, on, or near other premises such as:

- residential properties/estates
- remote field/moorland
- construction/demolition/refurbishment sites
- industrial sites
- shopping centres
- leisure centres
- quarries or other mineral works
- near or over water
- roads
- airfields and
- oil or other drilling rigs.

It is also sometimes the case that a car or other vehicle may be a regular 'place of work' if it is used for the execution of work activities. In the UK, road traffic accidents or collisions have been expressly identified as one of the highest work-related causes of serious (and fatal) injuries suffered by employees while at work.



## 4.2 Perception and behaviours

It is important to keep in mind that each individual's perception of their place of work, and subsequently their behaviour, will differ depending on their competence (skills, knowledge and experience) within that location and the attendant risks and opportunities.

Individuals who are exposed to new environments attract a significantly greater potential risk of harm than those who already have a robust knowledge and understanding of that environment. This is often due to the newcomer not fully comprehending the inherent risks in the new environment (and the procedures to manage them effectively), rather than their overall competence. This highlights the need to provide comprehensive induction training in all such circumstances. Conversely, it is also recognised that individuals who are extremely familiar with their environments can become complacent and fail to maintain appropriate vigilance.

It can prove valuable to understand any potential enhancement of risk due to the RICS member's (or those individuals accompanying them while working):

- physical ability
- age
- culture
- language or
- other individual and personal circumstances and abilities.

It is important that, while considering the listed perceptions and behaviours, this does not lead to discrimination or perceived discrimination.

It is important to recognise that, although a place of work may have had a benign risk profile under one set of circumstances, it may be very different under other circumstances (e.g. driving a car for a short distance on a bright summer's day compared to driving a long distance in the dark while snow falls, or a development site during the early stages of construction compared with the same site once the work has been completed and is open for occupation).

## 4.3 Geographical location

As well as the immediate physical characteristics, geographical location (the country the place of work is in, and therefore the prevailing jurisdiction) has an effect on the legal requirements for the provision of health and safety management.

Much of the prevailing law appropriate to the jurisdiction that relates to places of work will need to be researched appropriately – local expert opinion is recommended. There may be further rules, regulations and guidance that could affect the manner in which health and safety risk in the place of work is managed. For example, rules on building construction are different if a building is to be erected in an earthquake zone, and rules for working in areas at risk of flooding may be different to those where there is no such inherent risk.

There are many different national rules and regulations regarding the standards required to maintain safe use of utilities and operation of equipment (such as supply of electricity, gas, water, air conditioning plant/heating/boilers, etc.). There are also wide variations internationally for the management of fire risk, the use and disposal of deleterious materials (e.g. asbestos) as well as clinical and other inherently 'riskier' waste materials.

#### 4.4 Historical use

If the place of work is located on ground that has been used before (e.g. a brownfield site), it is worth establishing whether any potential contamination or similar matters of relevance remain from past usage.

#### 4.5 Immediate locality

Consideration should be given to the other inhabitants/occupants of the property and/or those in its immediate surroundings (e.g. could they be hostile to the presence of the RICS member?). This is particularly important where the RICS member may be lone working and dealing with cultural differences and/or perhaps animals or unfriendly occupants.

Adjacent land use and neighbours' work activities and other potential hazards may present additional risk to the place of work. For example, if there are government buildings, military establishments, major transport hubs, agricultural/construction equipment and/or 'signature' buildings or local landmarks, these all attract a greater threat of civil disturbance or terrorism. Some will add other risks such as excessive noise (e.g. aeroplanes, trains), large volumes of people (e.g. well-attended entertainment venues) or geological issues such as a risk of flooding due to proximity to rivers or ineffective local drainage.

#### 4.6 Risk identification and management

It is necessary to identify the risks of working at (or in/on) a particular place of work, which may include consideration of factors outside the immediate limits of the premises or site.

It is important that information concerning the risks and the safe method(s) of managing them is provided to all those who may be affected; this may include visitors, contractors, clients and the general public, as well as the RICS members and their immediate colleagues.

It is recommended that part of the risk-management process includes the careful selection of appropriately competent personnel and an appropriate induction process before they start work at the location.

#### 4.7 Common requirements at places of work

Regarding more common places of work such as offices and site-based work, there are a number of matters that can prove valuable to put in place. The following matters may often be termed 'welfare' or 'workplace environment'.

Wherever people are expected to work for extended periods of time at a particular place of work it is accepted practice to put in place basic requirements to make the place of work comfortable and an efficient and productive operational centre. Common basic needs should include:

- toilet facilities (appropriate for the number of personnel and with regard to the numbers of men and women, and those who may have limited mobility)
- access to clean and safe drinking water
- appropriate control over temperature such that extreme temperatures (either too hot or too cold) are avoided
- appropriate replacement of fresh air, such that fresh, wholesome air is available with sufficient changes of recycled air being in place where needed
- adequate light, preferably natural light and such that it is not too bright and/or the surfaces on desks and computer screens, etc. do not reflect too much and cause discomfort
- appropriate emergency arrangements (see subsection 4.8), which include adequate provision of first aid (and appropriately trained personnel to administer it) and arrangements to detect dangerous situations, alert everyone and evacuate (or otherwise) personnel to a place of safety
- space for storage of files, etc. as well as space for storage of clothing (hats and coats, etc.) including, potentially, a place to dry wet work clothes/overalls/PPE (personal protective equipment)
- an area safe and free from hazards (dust, noise, etc.) where personnel may eat, drink and take rest breaks
- assessment of the risks in the workplace. For example, this may include assessment of the desk and computer arrangements to avoid repetitive strain injuries, suitability of any PPE (personal protective equipment) issued to employees, and any need to consider noise, dust, light, dangerous atmospheres, hazardous materials, areas of restricted access, etc. and
- if the workplace is an ancient structure or is of significant age, consider the structural stability of all the elements with greater care, especially if the general public have access.

## 4.8 Emergency arrangements

Wherever individuals are required to undertake work, it is important to have appropriate procedures in place to ensure they can be evacuated to a place of safety in the event of an emergency situation.

It is important that, when an RICS member is visiting any premises or site, they make themselves fully aware of the emergency arrangements in place before or on arrival.

What is appropriate and necessary for each location depends on the specific threats to the safety of the people and property at that location.

It is worth considering that some emergencies may affect the RICS-regulated firm and employees for a long time after the initial event. For example, if a building is burned out by fire, damaged by high winds, hurricanes, is flooded or is otherwise contaminated (e.g. with legionella in the water system) it may take weeks, months or years to relocate. If anyone is hurt or killed in the incident, this will affect the people, as well as having an impact on the RICS-regulated firm's reputation. These wider matters are addressed by business continuity/resilience planning and it is recommended that these issues are also clearly considered and addressed by RICS-regulated firms of all sizes.

In complex situations it is recommended that expert opinion is sought before reoccupation of the location is allowed.

The most common major threat in the built environment is fire and the resilience of buildings to fire, smoke and similar catastrophic events differs greatly depending on the structure and compartmentalisation of the building.

It is often useful for basic emergency preparation to include:

- provision of appropriate detection (i.e. heat, smoke, carbon monoxide or gas)
- consideration of prevention procedures (inspection routines; removal of combustible materials, especially if these have the potential for explosion or the generation of toxic fumes or dusts), which includes the proper storage of fuels such as gas cylinders, oil, gasoline, etc.
- consideration of extinguishing agents, which may include fire-extinguishing systems such as handheld devices, sprinklers or inert gas (e.g. in server/communication/plant rooms)
- provision of appropriate alarms: these may include sounders, sirens and lights (especially where there are audibly disabled personnel present)
- provision of emergency lighting: it is very important to ensure alarms can be heard and seen in all locations (e.g. in cellars, undercrofts and on roofs or external areas), and that lighting remains sufficient in the event of main power loss
- maintenance regimes for all of the preceding points
- the travelling time for any third-party emergency services, including fire services and the location of doctors, hospitals, etc.
- provision of robust evacuation procedures leading to a safe place (note that it is possible that retiring to a safe haven within a building may also be an effective procedure in certain circumstances). It is advisable to consider more than one safe place since a single location could be compromised by the event itself. It tends to be the duty of the occupier to ensure evacuation of a premises: fire and emergency services should not be relied on in the first instance

- assessment of the risk of fire and other emergencies. A clear description of how these are managed should be provided to all occupants at all locations and
- at least two full practice evacuations undertaken annually, as people tend to do what they are used to doing when traumatic events occur.

There is a moral responsibility for occupiers of buildings to undertake assessment of the risk of fire in occupied premises, and they should share the information with all affected occupiers.

## 4.9 Building services

Most places of work have significant amounts of equipment installed that affect the effective operation of the premises. It is recommended that all such equipment is carefully identified and then serviced and maintained in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. Many items of plant and equipment will also require statutory testing and certification.

Some examples of equipment requiring regular testing and maintenance are:

- lifts and lifting equipment (including lifting beams)
- air conditioning and ventilation/heating systems
- water equipment (drinking and otherwise)
- other utility services (e.g. gas or electricity) and
- pressure vessels (e.g. boilers, calorifiers).

## 4.10 Maintenance of buildings

Maintenance of the building fabric sometimes requires the use or provision of temporary access equipment such as mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs), which may include 'scissor lifts' or 'cherry pickers', or the erection of temporary scaffolds in order to gain access to parts of the structure or fabric that require work or inspection. Proof that the access equipment has been maintained, inspected and operated by a competent person for safety should be obtained before use.

## 4.11 Fixed equipment

Fixed equipment is often installed, especially in high-rise buildings, for the purpose of regular cleaning of cladding, glazing and other external surfaces, and may include:

- cradles, suspended or tracked specialist equipment housed at high level or at roof level and
- gantries, fixed ladders and tracked ladders.

All plant and equipment should be subject to regular inspections (statutory inspections may be required under several sets of regulations and, if so, should be carried out by competent

persons, with written reports or records maintained), kept in good working order and, where appropriate, worn, damaged or defective components replaced.

# 5 Occupational hygiene and health

## 5.1 Occupational hygiene

Occupational hygiene uses science and engineering to identify and control exposure to harmful agents in the workplace that cause ill health. Assessing the health risks posed by harmful agents such as asbestos and silica dusts, welding fumes, chemical coatings, noise and vibration can be a complex undertaking: our understanding of how dangerous harmful agents can be is constantly changing.

An occupational hygienist's expertise is in several areas that are crucial to ensuring work is planned and carried out with minimal risk to the individual worker's health and an organisation's interests. First, the occupational hygienist looks at the proposed work and determines where and how workers' exposure to harmful agents is likely to occur. The occupational hygienist also advises whether or not the exposure is a significant risk to health. This may require some scientific investigation as it can be difficult, sometimes impossible, to tell how much exposure is occurring without a detailed study or carefully designed survey.

Therefore, the occupational hygienist can devise and implement a measurement exercise for determining how much exposure to a harmful agent a worker is going to receive – be it dust, gases, fumes, noise, vibration, etc. The outcome of this exercise provides information for deciding the exposure control measures, proportionate to the risk, that need to be in place to protect workers' health.

Finally, the occupational hygienist advises on the range of control measure options that take into account good occupational hygiene practice, local legislation and the practicalities of getting the job done. A professional occupational hygienist can advise on control of airborne hazards (dust, fumes, vapours, etc.), noise, vibration, skin contact with chemicals and many other harmful agents.

Prevention is better than cure. The occupational hygiene profession works hand in hand with the occupational health profession, in particular to tackle the causes of workplace-related disease at the source. Understanding what each discipline brings to the table and how they complement each other is vital for achieving a reduction in work-related disease(s).

Further information on occupational hygiene is available from the [British Occupational Hygiene Society](#) (BOHS), where a directory of occupational hygiene consultants is maintained.

## 5.2 Occupational health

Occupational health considers the physical and mental effects of work on health (including health issues that develop over time, referred to as 'chronic') and assists an RICS-regulated firm in ensuring its employees are fit for their work through health assessment, promotion, maintenance and surveillance.

The risk of work activities or materials causing 'acute' illness (i.e. an illness that comes sharply to a crisis or is severe) is also a possibility and should be considered at all times.

While working in an office environment is generally lower risk, many RICS members are exposed to higher occupational health risks in the course of their duties when away from the office.

A health and safety management system should include occupational health monitoring and should include arrangements for managing the following matters:

- work-related stress
- health, well-being and mental health
- violence, bullying and harassment
- alcohol and drug misuse
- musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)
- repetitive strain injuries (RSIs)
- noise-induced hearing damage
- asbestos
- hazardous substances
- cancer and other potentially relevant diseases
- biosecurity
- new and expectant mothers
- sun protection
- environmental factors
- health monitoring and health surveillance and
- hand–arm vibration syndrome.

These are explained briefly in subsections 5.2.1–5.2.14.

### 5.2.1 Work-related stress

Work-related stress is often described as adverse reactions that individuals may suffer due to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work. Current best practice guidance recommends using a set of management standards that define the characteristics, or culture, of an organisation where the risks from work-related stress are being effectively



managed and controlled. The management standards cover six key areas of work that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. In other words, they cover the primary sources of stress at work.

The management standards are:

- 1 **demands:** this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment
- 2 **control:** how much say the person has in the way they do their work
- 3 **support:** this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the RICS-regulated firm, line management and colleagues
- 4 **relationships:** this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- 5 **role:** whether people understand their role within the RICS-regulated firm and whether the firm ensures that they do not have conflicting roles and
- 6 **change:** how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the RICS-regulated firm.

The management standards represent a set of conditions that, if present, reflect a high level of health, well-being and organisational performance.

An appropriate standard of risk assessment can then be used to:

- identify the risk factors
- identify people at risk
- evaluate the risks
- record the findings and
- monitor and review the assessments.

### 5.2.2 Health, well-being and mental health

Many organisations are looking to implement well-being policies. While there is no absolute definition of 'well-being' it is generally understood to represent the efforts that organisations implement to encourage all-round health for their employees. This will therefore need to include consideration of the 'non-work related' issues that affect all people (the life stresses and strains that impact most people from time to time as part of their life experience) as well as their general fitness and health.

Well-being initiatives are often put in place by, or with the assistance of, the organisations' human resources (HR) teams. Some organisations now offer 'health clinics' or memberships to gyms, support to buy bicycles, smoking cessation clinics, nurseries for children, access for pets and many other benefits to support the general health and well-being of their staff.

Health and safety and HR (or other employee support teams) will need to cooperate to ensure the success of well-being programmes in the workplace as this may require health surveillance and could impact on arrangements or contracts for employment and, potentially, local law or regulations.

Research is beginning to highlight that the impact on absence arising out of work-related ill health such as work-related stress, musculoskeletal disorders, dermatitis, etc. is significantly higher than the consequences arising from traditional 'single event' accidents at work. This is why the management of workplace (occupational) ill health issues are considered key to reducing ill health absence arising out of work activities. It is readily recognised that the importance of reducing work-related contributory effects to ill health is a sensible business approach. However, one complication with ill health absence is that it is multi causal, with components including work, home life and natural physical deterioration as people get older.

Another issue that is now recognised as deleterious to good health is 'presenteeism' – the act of attending work while sick or unfit for work and/or for more hours than is required, causing reduced and/or unsafe performance and the potential for wider ill health issues.

Mental health (in its widest sense) is regarded as being a significant contributor to sickness absence. Although progress has been made in relation to stress management and raising awareness of mental stress and strain, it is recommended that organisations put in place processes for assessing and minimising risks to mental illness and, where an incidence is identified, suitable and sufficient care is made available.

### 5.2.3 Violence, bullying and harassment

For the purposes of this professional standard, 'violence' is defined as any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.

Bullying at work can take many forms. It can involve:

- ignoring or excluding someone
- spreading malicious rumours or gossip
- humiliating someone in public
- giving someone unachievable or meaningless tasks
- constantly undervaluing someone's work performance and
- cyber nuisance.

Bullies are often, but not always, more senior than the person they are bullying. Bullies sometimes target groups as well as individuals.

Harassment relates to discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

It is recommended that employers have a policy in place that enables them to:

- identify these problems

- provide appropriate communication channels for the problems to be addressed and
- put in place impartial and fair systems to address and resolve problems.

## 5.2.4 Alcohol and drug misuse

Misuse of alcohol and drugs (whether prescription or illegal) is a major cause of workplace absenteeism and impaired performance. At worst, it can be a direct cause of workplace accidents (e.g. working with machinery, driving equipment under the influence of drugs or alcohol).

It is recommended that employers put in place a policy to address the misuse of alcohol and drugs. In some cases, this might extend to a ban on the consumption of alcohol and associated screening for alcohol and drug use together with disciplinary procedures for breaches of the rules.

It is worth considering that an alcohol or drug habit may be related, in part, to work-related stress, and this should be investigated as a possible underlying cause.

## 5.2.5 Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)

### 5.2.5.1 Manual handling

Manual handling is a major cause of a range of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), including back pain and upper limb disorders. Manual-handling operations are not restricted to lifting and lowering heavy loads and can also include:

- pushing
- pulling
- bending
- twisting
- reaching and
- carrying.

A risk assessment should address not only the weight of the loads being handled but also:

- the nature of the materials being handled (sharp edges, container shape, stability of the load, temperature, etc.)
- the physical capabilities of the people involved
- the task involved (duration, distance, etc.) and
- the environment (slippery or uneven surfaces, poor visibility, etc.).

All manual handling operations should be planned, giving due regard to the risk assessment for the task, and training in manual handling techniques be provided to employees who undertake manual handling operations. Consideration should always be given to the use of mechanical handling where appropriate.

### 5.2.5.2 Repetitive strain injuries (RSIs)

Another significant cause of MSDs is a range of activities that can result in RSIs and which commonly manifest themselves as upper limb disorders (ULDs) affecting the arms, from fingers to shoulder and the neck.

One of the primary causes of RSIs for employees in service industries is poor workstation design for computer users. The following should be carried out to minimise risks associated with the use of workstations:

- analyse workstations to assess and reduce risks
- ensure that workstations meet specified minimum requirements
- plan work activities so that they include breaks or changes of activity
- provide eye and eyesight tests on request, and special spectacles if needed and
- provide information and training.

Analysis of workstations to ensure they are designed correctly should address the comfort of the user (room to move freely, adjustable chair and screen) as well as the conditions of the immediate environment (lighting levels, glare, reflection, etc.).

### 5.2.6 Noise-induced hearing damage

Exposure to noise at work needs to be addressed where employees are required to work near noisy plant or machinery for anything other than brief periods of time, such as undertaking a valuation inspection of plant and equipment in a functioning woodworking factory or being near a noisy operation on a construction site.

As a guide, the following basic tests should be undertaken to determine whether noise levels introduce a problem requiring further action to reduce the risk.

If the workplace is intrinsically noisy – that is, it is significantly noisier than you would expect from the sounds of everyday life – it is possible that the noise levels will exceed 80dB(A). This is comparable to the noise level of a busy street, a typical vacuum cleaner or a crowded restaurant: a conversation could be held, but the noise will be intrusive. Working in an environment of 80dB(A) for eight hours will result in exposure at the lower exposure action value (see Table 3).

Test	Probable noise level	Duration
The noise level is intrusive but normal conversation is possible	80dB(A) (lower exposure action value)	Over 6 hours
You have to shout to talk to someone 2 metres away	85dB(A) (upper exposure action value)	Over 2 hours
You have to shout to talk to someone 1 metre away	90dB(A) (Note: the exposure limit value is 87dB(A)).	Over 40 minutes

Table 3: Noise level guidance

*Source: Table 3 is adapted from HSE, Controlling noise at work, 2005.*

General risk assessment procedures require exposure to noise to be avoided and, where this is not possible, for noise levels to be reduced so far as is reasonably practicable and for hearing protection to be made available and used.

RICS members should check local regulatory requirements to ensure compliance with local laws to limit risk of noise to people. You can do the following to mitigate potential damage to hearing by noise:

- At the lower exposure action value of 80dB(A), make hearing protection available for employees to wear and provide employees with information, instruction and training.
- At the upper exposure action level of 85dB(A), the workplace should be designated as a 'hearing protection zone' and personal hearing protectors are to be provided and used by employees within the zone (and anyone else entering the zone). The extent of the zone should be marked with warning signs in an approved format. Anyone entering a hearing protection zone has to wear appropriate hearing protection when noisy work activities are in progress, irrespective of the duration of their exposure to noise.

### 5.2.7 Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring rock mineral that has heat- and fire-resisting properties. It has been used extensively worldwide in a wide range of building materials.

## ASBESTOS BUILDING

TYPICAL LOCATIONS FOR THE MOST COMMON ASBESTOS-CONTAINING MATERIALS

**KEY**

### ROOF AND EXTERIOR WALLS

- 1 Roof sheets and tiles
- 2 Guttering and drainpipe
- 3 Wall cladding
- 4 Soffit/facia boards
- 5 Panel beneath window
- 6 Roofing felt and coating to metal wall cladding

### BOILER, VESSELS AND PIPEWORK

- 7 Lagging on boiler, pipework, calorifier etc.
- 8 Damaged lagging and associated debris
- 9 Paper lining under non-asbestos pipe lagging
- 10 Gasket in pipe and vessel joints
- 11 Rope seal on boiler access hatch and between cast iron boiler sections
- 12 Paper lining inside steel boiler casing
- 13 Boiler flue

### CEILINGS

- 14 Spray coating to ceiling, walls, beams/columns
- 15 Loose asbestos in ceiling/floor cavity
- 16 Tiles, slats, canopies and firebreaks above ceilings
- 17 Textured coatings and paints

### INTERIOR WALLS/PANELS

- 18 Loose asbestos inside partition walls
- 19 Partition walls
- 20 Panel beneath window
- 21 Panel lining to lift shaft
- 22 Panelling to vertical and horizontal beams
- 23 Panel behind electrical equipment
- 24 Panel on access hatch to service riser
- 25 Panel lining service riser and floor
- 26 Heater cupboard around domestic boiler
- 27 Panel behind/under heater
- 28 Panel on or inside, fire door
- 29 Bath panel

### FLOORING MATERIALS

- 30 Floor tiles, linoleum and paper backing, lining to suspended floor

### AIR HANDLING SYSTEMS

- 31 Lagging
- 32 Gaskets
- 33 Anti-vibration gaiter

### DOMESTIC APPLIANCES

- 34 Gaskets, rope seals and panels in domestic boilers
- 35 'Caposil' insulating blocks, panels, paper, string etc in domestic heater
- 36 String seals on radiators

### OTHER

- 37 Fire blanket
- 38 Water tank
- 39 Brake/clutch lining

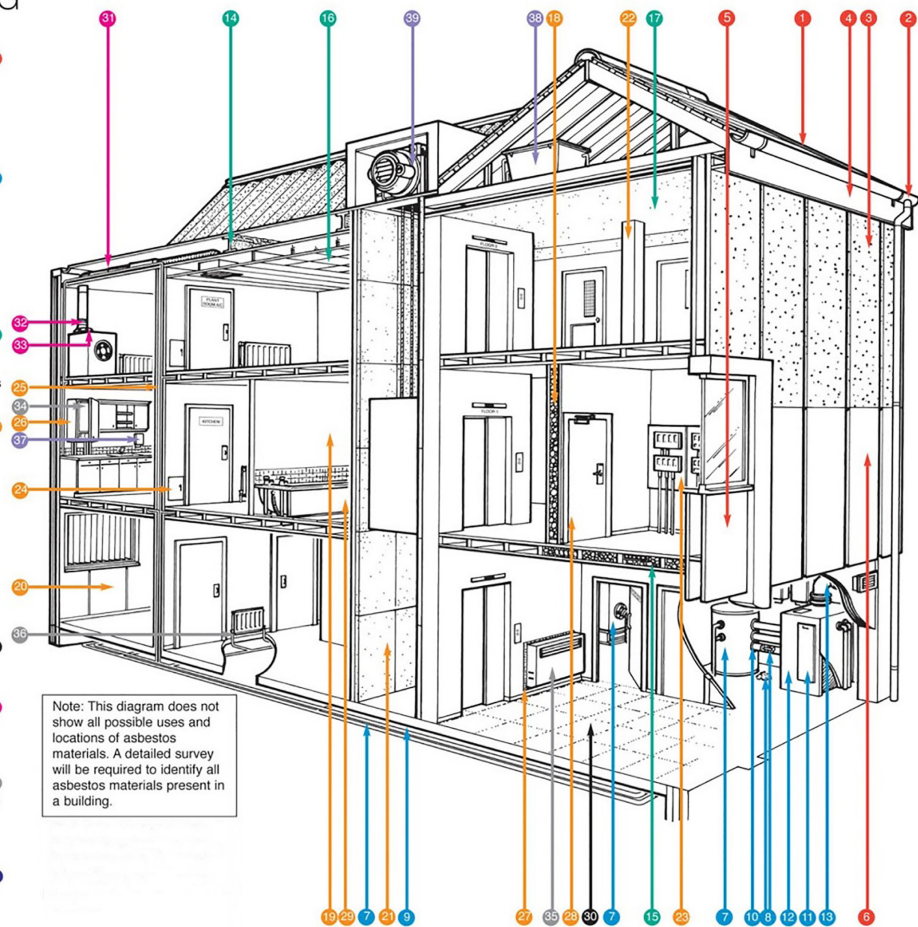


Figure 5: Potential uses of asbestos in a building

Source: Reproduced with kind permission from the HSE

Figure 5 shows typical locations of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) in a building.

Asbestos fibres can cause a range of lung-related disorders and other disorders when the fibres are inhaled. The more serious conditions result in significantly impaired lung function, cancers and death, often many years after exposure to the asbestos.

Each individual exposure should be avoided/minimised because risk increases as exposure accumulates over time.

Anyone in the vicinity of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) that are being disturbed (e.g. drilling into walls; sanding materials; removing cladding, etc.) may be exposed to any asbestos fibres released from those materials. The widespread use of asbestos in building construction until relatively recently means that exposure is likely unless appropriate health and safety precautions are taken.

It is necessary to identify ACMs and to produce a management plan for preventing exposure to asbestos.

The recommended starting points are:

- 1 an asbestos survey to identify and manage ACMs during the normal occupation and use of the premises
- 2 an asbestos survey prior to commencing work where the premises, or part of the premises, need upgrading, refurbishment or demolition
- 3 having carried out an asbestos survey, the occupier and owner then need a management plan, which should include training for key staff either with asbestos-awareness training, or if disturbance to the fabric is required, appropriate training on how to carry this out safely should be provided.

If ACMs not already addressed in the management plan are identified, the use of specific procedures to avoid exposing people to asbestos fibres, including the use of contractors (specifically competent to work with asbestos) are to be put in place before any work commences.

Further guidance on controlling the risks presented by asbestos are available in RICS' *Asbestos: legal requirements and best practice for property professionals and clients*.

#### Case study 1

A health and safety consultant who died in 2007 at the age of 61 from asbestos-related lung damage wrote an account of his earlier working life and how exposure to asbestos had cut short his life.

Writing for *Safety and Health Practitioner* (IOSH 2007), Robert Owen CMIOSH said:

'During the 1960s I served an apprenticeship as a heating engineer, which involved work with asbestos-cased pipe insulation materials. The exposure could be extreme at times and no hazard warning was provided, either by the employer or by the college during training. I completed my apprenticeship at the age of 21. I have not worked with asbestos since.

Forty years later, in 2005, I noticed that when gardening or undertaking any exercise activity, my breathing became laboured very quickly and I would need to stop for a rest. I put this down to smoking and age and so did not report to my doctor. In December that year, I lost my appetite for many things but, being overweight, I didn't worry as I figured, well, I could do with losing a few pounds. But when I'd lost more than two stone and felt no fitter or better in any way, I finally went to my [doctor]. As soon as I mentioned shortness of breath he asked about asbestos. Of course, I knew the implications.

After x-rays and CT scans I was diagnosed with mesothelioma on 8 September 2006 and told that if I lived for 12 months it would be a bonus.'

He died the day after writing the article.

### 5.2.8 Hazardous substances

In addition to managing asbestos, arrangements for managing health and safety need to include provisions for managing any other hazardous substances. Such substances may include not only purchased materials, such as cleaning products (e.g. bleach), pesticides or solvents used in production processes, but also substances that are by-products of such processes and naturally occurring substances. For example:

- pesticides (agrochemicals, timber treatments, vermin baits) in store or in use
- lead paint dusts (from abrasion of old painted surfaces)
- industrial solvents
- respirable crystalline silica arising (e.g. dust produced when cutting brick, tiles, blocks, concrete, etc. and airborne sand or dust)
- engine exhaust fumes and
- dusts and spores from decomposing vegetation, including moulds.

A risk assessment (including the consideration of information sheets about the material procured from the manufacturer/distributor) should be undertaken with the aim of avoiding exposure to hazardous substances and, if this is not possible, controlling exposure by measures that are proportionate to the health risks.

Working procedures are required to include the provision of information and suitable training so that people know what:

- substances they are working with and what harm the substances can cause
- the symptoms are of harmful exposure
- medical treatment and other action to take in the event of harmful exposure and
- control measures are required in order to work safely with the substance.



### Case study 2

A housing association was convicted after a security guard was killed by carbon monoxide poisoning on a construction site. A petrol-powered generator was used inside the site office and the resulting fumes that the security guard inhaled caused fatal levels of carbon monoxide to accumulate in his blood.

A risk assessment should have been undertaken for the operation on site so that the hazard could have been identified, the nature and degree of risk evaluated, and remedial action taken, such as considering alternative power sources or putting the generator outside in a safe, well-ventilated position. The security guard was a contractor and the housing association had a duty to keep him safe.

### 5.2.9 Diseases

A range of diseases can arise from work-related activities. In terms of relevance to RICS members, diseases fall into two broad categories:

- 1 **chronic diseases** arising from repeated or ongoing exposure to hazardous substances. Such diseases include:
  - a skin diseases such as dermatitis (also known as eczema), urticaria (also known as hives), and skin cancers and
  - b respiratory diseases such as occupational asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and silicosis.
- 2 **transmitted diseases** caught by people who are exposed to the organism that causes the disease concerned, including:
  - a legionnaires' disease, a potentially fatal form of pneumonia caused by the bacterium *legionella pneumophila* and related bacteria that can be found naturally in environmental water sources such as rivers, lakes and reservoirs, usually in low numbers. As they are commonly found in environmental sources they may also be found in purpose-built water systems such as cooling towers, evaporative condensers, swimming pools and whirlpool spas. The disease is caught by the bacteria being dispersed or sprayed into the atmosphere, from where they can enter the body through the lungs. Such purpose-built water systems therefore need to be subject to specific hygiene procedures and
  - b zoonoses, which are diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans such as:
    - i Weil's disease (a form of leptospirosis), which is a serious, and sometimes fatal, bacterial infection that is transmitted to humans by contact with urine from infected rats and cows
    - ii Lyme disease, a bacterial infection transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected tick and
    - iii psittacosis, a bacterial infection that can be acquired from contact with birds or bird droppings.

Be aware that different climatic environments have a different range of diseases and appropriate professional advice should be sought.

For all of the above, appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) and good personal hygiene are important health and safety control measures.

Risk assessments for work activities and for hazardous substances can ensure that harmful levels of exposure are avoided. However, some degree of occupational health supervision should be provided where the findings of assessments show that exposure may be significant or where people have allergies or pre-existing conditions that make them more susceptible to harm than most people.

### 5.2.10 Biosecurity

Biosecurity is an occupational health issue that may not necessarily have a direct impact on human health but is important to many businesses that RICS members may visit. It is important for anyone visiting premises that are subject to biosecurity to ensure that they follow all procedures required by the business operating from the premises in order to reduce risks.

At agricultural production units, visitors' vehicles, clothes and footwear should be clean in order to limit spreading weed seeds and transmittable diseases between premises (foot and mouth disease, avian flu, swine fever, etc.).

At food preparation, storage and distribution premises, food hygiene requirements should be complied with in order to avoid contamination of food and transmission of diseases to humans (E.coli, salmonellosis, etc.).

At hospitals, care homes or other premises where clinical waste may be present (used needles, wound dressings, etc.), suitable precautions including appropriate disposal, the use of appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) and good personal hygiene practices should be taken in order to avoid infection or contamination. Similar precautions may be necessary at vacant or derelict premises frequented by drug abusers.

### 5.2.11 New and expectant mothers

Employers need to provide a safe and healthy work environment for their pregnant or breastfeeding employees, so it is important that employees know that they should inform their employers if they are expectant or new mothers. Risk assessments for work activities should also take account of the special needs of new and expectant mothers.

Examples of matters that require careful consideration or avoidance include:

- exposure to hazardous substances (particularly those affecting the reproduction systems such as lead or ionising radiation)
- intensive manual handling activities and
- contact with animals (such as sheep at lambing time).

### 5.2.12 Sun protection

Risk assessments for personnel working outside should take account of exposure to sunlight and the associated risks of damage to skin, which can include:

- sunburn
- blistering
- skin ageing and
- skin cancer arising from longer term exposure.

It is important that information is provided to people and they should be encouraged to:

- keep skin covered
- use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least an appropriate level of protection on exposed skin and
- schedule work activities to avoid periods of intense exposure to the sun when at work.

### 5.2.13 Environmental factors

A number of occupational health conditions can arise from a wide range of environmental factors in the workplace such as:

- poor lighting
- high or low temperatures and
- background noise.

Such matters may be identifiable as specific problems, in which case remedial action can be planned and implemented.

Sometimes, personnel may exhibit symptoms of occupational health problems from the building environment (e.g. headaches, runny noses, etc. and generally increased sickness absence) but it may be difficult to identify specific causes (sometimes caused by bad air and referred to as 'sick building syndrome'), in which case specialist advice should be sought and health surveillance may be necessary.

### 5.2.14 Health monitoring and health surveillance

The importance of addressing both health and safety matters means that both areas need to be covered fully in the health and safety policy and arrangements for a business.

It is recommended that employers obtain essential health information from employees so that risk assessments can address the particular needs of employees with relevant medical conditions such as:

- allergies
- asthma and other lung conditions and
- eyesight.

It is recommended that health surveillance should be carried out periodically where the risk assessment has indicated that it is necessary.

The extent to which information is needed and acted upon will depend largely on the nature of the work activities concerned and employers can formulate a policy accordingly. This might extend to:

- a medical questionnaire or medical examinations for new employees
- regular medical examinations for existing employees and
- health surveillance or screening for critical exposures.

It should be noted that such data may be subject to privacy/data protection legislation in some jurisdictions.

# 6 Visiting premises or sites

## 6.1 Before visiting premises or sites

RICS-regulated firms, RICS members and property professionals need to have procedures for visiting premises or sites. The procedures for any particular visit will depend on the type and nature of the premises or site and the reason for and nature of the visit.

Before visiting a premises or site to carry out an inspection, survey or site investigation of land, structures or occupied buildings, the RICS member should carry out a pre-assessment of the hazards and risks that are likely to be encountered on the visit. The pre-assessment should include the requirement for appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

RICS-regulated firms and RICS members should have a set of procedures in place for carrying out this type of assessment, including suitable training and instruction for employees. These may range from a fairly simple generic assessment for visiting premises or sites under their management where they already have a wealth of information readily available, to a detailed assessment of a site where access equipment may need to be hired in, or arrangements made to enter a confined space or gain access to a restricted area.

It is important to collect as much information as possible from the client or person who has requested the visit, or from the organisation or person who is in control of or managing the premises or site. At this stage it is useful to have a checklist (see subsection 6.2) to ensure the right questions are asked, but remember that there may be matters requiring action that are not on the checklist.

As full an assessment as is reasonably possible should be made, consulting with others as necessary. If the visit is not planned properly, it may not be possible to visit parts of the premises or site upon arrival.

It may even be necessary to abandon the visit altogether and revisit once the necessary arrangements have been made, which may have commercial consequences that need consideration.

## 6.2 Checklist of matters to consider

### 6.2.1 Travelling to and from site

- Will it be safer to use public transport or use your own transport?
- Has the journey been planned to avoid driving too fast, for too long or when tired?
- Is the RICS member particularly vulnerable (e.g. under prescribed medication)?
- Be aware of where to park (clear, secure, well lit, easy to exit and not locked before you leave).

### 6.2.2 Lone working

- Does the RICS-regulated firm have specific requirements or procedures for lone working (whether in the office or other building, on a construction site, on open land, or while driving at work) that they require employees to follow?
- Is lone working a safe option and, if so, what provisions are made for communications in an emergency?
- Does the RICS-regulated firm have a record of employees' mobile phone numbers and would the lone worker have a good signal at the premises or site?
- Who has a record of where the lone worker is and when to expect them back in the office or at home?
- Have arrangements been made for regular 'check-in' calls?
- How would rescue be achieved, including access?
- Does the lone worker suffer from any medical condition that could affect personal safety, such as epilepsy, diabetes, etc.?
- Finally, ask the question 'if I did not come back from the property, who would know that I was missing and how would they be able to find me?'

### 6.2.3 Condition of property

- Are the premises known to be derelict or in poor condition, and if so what is the extent and nature of the damage?
- Are any areas defined as unsafe for access?
- Are security measures in force and how is access to be gained?
- If the site is a construction site, what stage has been reached?
- What are the site rules?
- Is protective clothing (including perhaps personal protective equipment (PPE)) or any other special equipment needed?

### 6.2.4 Occupation

- Are the premises or site occupied? If so, do the occupants know a visit is being made and have they made any special access arrangements, including any safeguarding matters?
- Who is likely to be encountered on the premises or site (e.g. members of the public, children, squatters, trespassers, vagrants, animals)?
- Are the occupants or neighbours likely to be aggressive or threatening?

### 6.2.5 Activity

If the premises or site is occupied, what is the nature of that occupation? For example:

- residential

- retail
- offices
- transport hub
- manufacturing
- warehousing
- agricultural, forestry, etc. or
- construction/refurbishment site.

The hazards should be considered; for example, environmental or process/activity such as noise, fumes, vehicle movements, vehicle exhaust, electronic equipment, mechanical plant or machinery, animals, etc.

### 6.2.6 Site rules and welfare

- Does the occupier have house or site rules?
- What are the emergency arrangements?
- Are there 'permit to work/enter' procedures to follow?
- Are there site-induction procedures to follow?
- Are toilet, wash and first aid facilities available and, if so, what are the arrangements?

### 6.2.7 Roofs

- Is it necessary to go on to the roof or can inspection be undertaken from elsewhere (e.g. neighbouring buildings, with binoculars, CCTV, drone)?
- If it is necessary to go on to the roof, is a safe means of access provided and is there a safe route once on the roof?
- Does the roof have appropriate guarding or edge protection?

### 6.2.8 High structures

- If a scaffold exists, has a competent person checked that it is safe for use?
- Are towers, masts, etc. to be visited and, if so, how will they be accessed?
- Is a 'cherry picker' or other special access equipment/mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) needed? If so, it should be managed by a competent supplier and checked to confirm it has been certified as safe for use.

### 6.2.9 Dangerous substances

- Are there likely to be any hazardous substances such as chemicals, radiation, asbestos, gas or other noxious atmosphere, explosives, etc. at the site? What safety precautions are needed? Seek specialist advice as necessary.
- Are records such as a register of asbestos containing materials (ACMs) or environmental reports available? What do they reveal and what special precautions need to be taken?

### 6.2.10 Diseases

- Could the site be contaminated with any form of clinical waste?
- Are there likely to be any used hypodermic syringes or needles, condoms, razor blades, etc.?
- Could legionella bacteria be present in disused water storage systems?
- What hazards might arise from the presence of vermin (e.g. Weil's disease and psittacosis)?
- Do any biosecurity procedures need to be followed (e.g. hygiene procedures for pig and poultry farms)?
- Does food preparation, storage and distribution take place and what hygiene restrictions or procedures are necessary?

### 6.2.11 Special access

- Are special access arrangements required (e.g. underground, abseiling) and who will provide it and manage it safely?
- Is special training needed?
- Are emergency rescue arrangements in place?

### 6.2.12 Special risks

Specialist advice should be obtained if any of the following hazards exist:

- Does the building or site present special hazards (e.g. railway premises, security establishments, plant rooms, rooftop telecoms equipment (microwave radiation from satellite dishes and other transmission equipment), old hospital premises (radiation in former x-ray units), excavations (unsupported sides, unventilated atmosphere), etc.)?
- Are there confined spaces? These are not just narrow or small spaces but poorly ventilated or enclosed spaces where the atmosphere may be toxic, lacking in oxygen or where flammable/explosive special precautions are required.
- Nanotechnology is used increasingly in many fields, especially engineering. These nanomaterials can present a risk to health and safety due to their miniscule size, and nanotechnology remains a highly specialised field. If the RICS member becomes involved with nanomaterials due to customers'/clients' instructions, it is highly recommended that fully competent advisers are sought and consulted in regard to the materials and their method of deployment, and any potential effect to the health and safety of people or the environment.

### 6.2.13 Access equipment

Do you need to take access equipment or arrange for it to be provided at the premises or site? For example:

- a ladder or



- a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP).

#### 6.2.14 Other equipment

In certain circumstances, appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) may be necessary, for example:

- gloves
- respirator or face mask
- safety helmet
- ear defenders
- eye protection
- safety footwear
- high-visibility clothing or
- temporary/task lighting.

#### 6.2.15 Environmental matters

- Will weather conditions and/or light levels increase risk? For example, snowstorms on the journey or windy conditions on high structures.
- Will extreme temperatures present a hazard (both hot and cold extremes)?

#### 6.2.16 Personal matters

- Does physical ability have any bearing on the hazards that have been identified? Pregnant or nursing women need special consideration. Would lack of fitness present a hazard in itself?
- Will phobias (e.g. vertigo or claustrophobia) or issues (e.g. a medical condition) impair judgement or affect personal safety?

The checklists in subsections 6.2.1–6.2.16 are by no means exhaustive and the extent to which any of the items might be relevant in a particular circumstance will vary.

### 6.3 Arriving and during visits to premises or at sites

However well a visit is planned in advance, matters that are unknown until arrival at the premises or site will need to be considered during the visit. This may arise simply through a general lack of information about the site, or because the condition of the property, its occupation or other factors are different or have changed unexpectedly (consider the use of dynamic risk assessment; refer to section 3.6).

If significantly dangerous situations are noticed (whether or not they are likely to affect safety or health) there is a duty to report the issue to an appropriate person (e.g. building owner, occupier or site manager) as soon as reasonably possible.

On arrival, review the original risk assessment of the hazards and be alert during the visit to other hazards such as those outlined in subsections 5.2.1–5.2.14 and 6.3.1–6.3.14. If RICS members feel uncomfortable or are not competent to manage the risks at any time during their visit, they should stop all activities immediately and obtain the assistance of a competent person.

### 6.3.1 Structural stability

Be aware of the chance of partial or total collapse of:

- chimney stacks, gable walls or parapets
- leaning, bulged and unrestrained walls (including boundary walls)
- rotten or corroded beams and columns
- roofs and floors and
- corroded metal fire escapes, platforms, balconies and walkways.

### 6.3.2 Timbers, glass and sharp objects

Look out for:

- rotten and broken floors and staircases (flimsy cellar flaps and broken pavement lights, floorboards, joists and buried timbers weakened by age, decay or insect attack)
- projecting nails and screws, broken glass
- glazing in windows and partitions that may be loose; hinges and sash cords that may be weak or broken; and glass panels in doors and walls that may be painted over and
- sharp edges and projecting objects.

### 6.3.3 Roofs

Do not go onto roof surfaces unless it is safe to do so. Hazards are likely to include some of the following:

- fragile asbestos cement and plastic coverings
- fragile roof lights (often obscured by dirt or temporary coverings)
- unprotected openings
- low parapets or unguarded roof edges, loose copings
- risks from lone working – consider all aspects beforehand
- rusted, rotten or moss-covered fire escapes, access ladders and guard rails
- rotten roof decking and joists
- slippery roof coverings (slates, moss- or algae-covered slopes)
- broken access hatches

- mineral wool dust, mortar droppings and bird-nesting material and excrement in roof voids
- cornered birds and vermin
- insects, including bee and wasp colonies
- water cooling plant that may contain legionella bacteria
- unguarded flat roofs
- broken, loose, rotten and slippery crawling boards and escape ladders
- weak flat roofs
- high winds during roof access
- ill-secured or flimsy, collapsible, sectional or fixed loft ladders
- projecting ceiling joists and low purlins
- badly lit roof voids and
- unboarded or unsupported insulation in roof voids.

#### 6.3.4 Unsafe atmospheres

Be aware of and take appropriate precautions against risks associated with the following, all of which are likely to exclude any opportunity for lone working:

- confined spaces with insufficient oxygen including manholes, roof voids, cellars, vaults, ducts, sealed rooms and silos, sewers and slurry stores
- rotting vegetation, which may consume oxygen and give off poisonous fumes
- accumulation of poisonous and flammable gases in buildings on contaminated land
- stores containing flammable materials such as paint, adhesives, fuel and cleaning fluids
- rooms/buildings that have excessive mould or fungi growth present within them
- hazardous substances, including toxic insecticides, herbicides and fungicides and
- gas build-up in subfloor voids.

#### 6.3.5 Danger from live and unsecured services

Look out for:

- electricity, gas, water and steam supplies
- high voltage rooms, substations and fuel stores
- temporary lighting installations: mains connections and generators
- hidden cables and pipes (beware intrusive investigations) and
- overhead/hidden electrical cables and similar utility supplies.

### 6.3.6 Radio frequency (RF) hazards

Be aware of:

- microwave dishes
- mobile phone transmission masts and
- electromagnets.

### 6.3.7 Slip and trip hazards

Be careful of:

- slippery surfaces
- overgrown vegetation
- changes in level
- obstacles and
- trailing cables.

### 6.3.8 Falls from height

Assess the risk of work including:

- using ladders, step ups, etc.
- working near unprotected edges
- use of MEWPs, scaffolds and access towers and
- working near excavations or shafts.

### 6.3.9 Hidden traps, ducts and openings

Look out for:

- lift and service shafts, stairwells and other unguarded openings
- unsecured, corroded or missing covers to underground chambers
- manholes, including those obscured by vegetation
- cesspools, wells and septic tanks
- surfaces concealed by debris or standing water and
- badly lit areas.

### 6.3.10 Impact of other people/animals on the property

Be aware of:

- physical dangers from squatters and trespassers or dogs
- disease risks from discarded syringes and condoms, etc.
- structures weakened by vandalism or arson

- aggressive tenants or property owners and
- the presence of homeless people and rough sleepers.

### 6.3.11 Contamination

Review the site or premises for hazards such as:

- asbestos, lead and other substances hazardous to health
- chemicals in storage or that have leaked
- contaminated water supplies and
- contaminated air-conditioning systems (legionella bacteria).

### 6.3.12 Rural environments

Review rural sites or premises for hazards such as:

- hazardous operations such as tree felling or tractor work
- shafts, holes, pits, ditches, etc.
- farm animals
- chemicals in storage or in use and
- unstable ground conditions (waterlogging, flooding, etc.).

### 6.3.13 Adverse weather conditions

Be aware of hazards posed by weather conditions such as:

- heavy rain
- ice/snow
- extreme cold
- extreme heat/sun and
- high winds (falling slates/tiles, falling tree branches, risks of being blown from high structures).

### 6.3.14 Vermin and birds

Review the site or premises for hazards such as:

- rats and mice (Weil's and other diseases)
- bird droppings (psittacosis)
- lice and fleas that may be present in bedding, soft furnishings, furniture upholstery and carpets
- Lyme disease from ticks present in vegetation or birds' nests and
- harmful insects, for example mosquitoes and spiders.

## 6.4 Securing the site and leaving

After completing the visit, the premises or site should be left secure and any occupier or manager who is present at the premises or site should be informed that you are leaving.

Similarly, it is recommended that someone in the office or at home knows where you are and when you are due to return. Let them know as you leave and confirm when you expect to be back.

## 6.5 Review on completion of the visit

On completion of the visit, it is worth considering whether:

- there are any lessons learned, and whether any changes should be made to individual/organisational procedures
- any hazards on the premises or site need to be notified to the appropriate manager for remedial action and
- any accidents, incidents or 'near miss' occurrences need to be entered into the RICS-regulated firm's accident book and notified to the occupier or manager of the property.

# 7 Fire safety

Fire as a subject matter is extensive and can, in many circumstances, require a high level of competence to establish an appropriate system for the management of fire safety. This document does not therefore seek to cover the wide remit of fire, but seeks, in this short section, to highlight the vital necessity to assess, monitor and manage fire risk at all times and in all places **based on adequate and competent advice**.

It will always be necessary to ensure that appropriate competent advice is taken at all stages while establishing a fire safety management system. This will include advice as to local law and regulations regarding how fire safety is (or should be) managed within the jurisdiction concerned.

There is extensive guidance and (jurisdiction dependent) regulation regarding all elements of fire safety; ensure you have appropriate access to all the guidance that is relevant to the risk that you are responsible for.

Fire safety is often divided between risk to people and risk to property; both will need assessment in relation to any overall management system.

Fire requires:

- 1 a source of fuel
- 2 oxygen and
- 3 a source of ignition.

As long as these three elements can be kept separate, a fire cannot occur.

When involved in the design/refurbishment of buildings, an appropriate assessment of fire risk needs to be carried out with a view to mitigating the effects of fire without reliance upon human management systems. You need to consider:

- The safety and evacuation of occupants including those unable to evacuate without assistance.
- The importance of early detection and automatic extinguishing to reduce risks to occupants and firefighters.
- The effects on business, including your own business continuity, affected by any fire in your property.
- Means of raising the alarm and, where appropriate, double knock facilities.

## 7.1 Risk of fire

Fire can occur almost anywhere and can be caused by:

- natural events (such as lightning strikes) or as a result of human error or omission, spread to/from woodland, grassland, crops and parkland as well as the built environment
- chemical reaction causing thermal release
- overheating of components next to a source of fuel
- 'hot-works' and cutting (sparks), welding, heat-sealing, and many other activities necessary while undertaking repair and construction work and
- manufacturing or fabrication processes where naked flames are necessary; for example, in a café or restaurant kitchen, fire is an ever-present risk (dirty and greasy heat/fume extraction systems are a well-recognised source of fuel for unintended, and swiftly spreading, fires).

### 7.1.1 Fire at a residential property

This presents a higher risk to the occupants when compared with the average commercial premises that is operated during daylight and while occupants are awake. This higher risk could be due to:

- unsafe or damaged electrical power circuits or white goods
- occupants may be asleep when a fire occurs and there may be children/pets and
- those with less mobility and those of higher vulnerability being in occupation.

Consider the need to:

- ensure the continued safety and condition of power circuits, plant and machinery including safety checks on white goods (for example refrigerators, freezers and washing machines, etc.) where these may be operational at a premises
- identify and manage any potential source of sufficient heat adequate to ignite a proximate source of fuel where there is adequate oxygen in the environment to cause a fire
- minimise the risk of arson – all waste and storage areas should be included in the assessment of fire risk, and the subsequent management system and
- identify and reduce risks of fires in ducting cable conduits.

## 7.2 Fire safety management

In order to evaluate the risk of fire and the potential consequences to both people and property, the following matters will need to be considered and assessed:

- The construction of the building, or type of property, including component parts such as the composition of insulation materials and any exterior cladding. This will need to include consideration of any changes made to the building or its components subsequent to its original construction and that could affect any assumptions made in relation to combustibility, fire spread and occupation.



- Any 'passive' fire protection measures incorporated within the building, including any compartmentation, the integrity of the compartments (including any fire stopping around penetrations of the compartment(s)) and all associated fire doors and designated emergency exit routes.
- The use of the property and what opportunities of fire are presented due to the specific use, or occupation, of the property.
- The occupants, visitors, contractors, the general public – who could be at risk, what is their age and are there any specific vulnerabilities?
- The fire 'loading' – what are the combustible materials likely to be within the property (be this raw materials, stored materials, furnishings and fabrics in residential properties).
- Any 'active' fire protection systems such as the fire and smoke detection/suppression and extinguishing equipment that is installed. Is it fully operational, serviced and maintained and tested as necessary? Are there any firefighters' lifts?
- The provision for emergency escape, including whether the emergency plans have considered immediate, phased or 'stay put' response procedures.
- The access for emergency responders, including access to appropriate supply (and pressure) of water, perhaps by way of fire hydrants. Consideration should be given to how high the property is, if firefighter equipment can actually reach all necessary points and, if not, how this affects any escape provision.
- Is there any risk of fire (or smoke) spread from adjacent properties?

Almost all of the above matters will require an appropriate level of technical expertise, so ensure that you procure the advice with care.

Once you have evaluated the risk, and how the risk can be minimised, a fire safety management system can be devised for the specific property; this will include:

- 1 A system to ensure all the appropriate fire-related plant and equipment is regularly serviced, maintained and tested.
- 2 An effective emergency evacuation plan, and assurances that this is practised, including for those living alone and the mobility restricted.
- 3 Where necessary, ensure there is adequate information readily available to emergency services in relation to any special risks or hazards they should know about when fighting any fire or the consequences thereof (i.e. matters that could be life-threatening to firefighters themselves, potential environmental damage due to contaminated firefighting water run-off entering watercourses, or perhaps potential for clouds of potentially toxic materials being spread by wind).
- 4 Effective training of any people responsible for the safety of occupants, such as fire marshals.

Above all, fire risks should be carefully considered and the correct advice taken at all times.

It is imperative that the fire safety management system is documented, shared with those at risk of fire and **maintained current at all times**.

# 8 Residential property surveying

All RICS members and RICS-regulated firms working with residential property should familiarise themselves with RICS' *Health and safety for residential property managers* as it sets out practical guidance about the significant health, safety and environmental matters relating to residential properties.

It covers most residential property types, but pays specific regard to RICS members and RICS-regulated firms dealing with agency sales of houses and flats, letting of single or multiple flats and residential blocks or otherwise working with residential property. It also includes references to houses in multiple occupation and build-to-rent properties.

Those responsible for managing residential property are advised to thoroughly review both this document and *Health and safety for residential property managers* in respect of potential legal duties. RICS members in the UK should also refer to:

- *RICS Valuation – Global Standards* (the 'Red book') and
- RICS' *Residential real estate agency*.

# 9 General procurement and management of contractors

## 9.1 General principles

Almost every property professional will at some point engage with or instruct third-party contractors.

Most countries have particular regulations for construction work relating to construction, design and management of the project. Irrespective of the complexity or specialism, the delegation or contracting of a task to a third party does not remove all responsibility from the RICS member. While liability and risk may be managed, statutory or contractual liability cannot be delegated. An RICS member could be found wholly or partially liable for failures by contractors that result in injury or loss. To avoid being inadvertently put at risk, or failing to adhere to a legal obligation, the management of contractors is to be viewed as a necessary and important task for any RICS member.

This section discusses the obligations of RICS-regulated firms and RICS members when managing contractors, and the methods for doing so to ensure safe working practice and to minimise risk and liability.

The landlord/owner/letting agent/tenant will always have an obligation to provide, in a timely manner, hazard information relating to the property within which the contractor is expected to work. Examples include residual risks, asbestos-containing materials, and peculiarities relating to plant and equipment.

RICS members may be involved in the procurement, instruction and management of a variety of contractors.

The principles for the management of contractors are the same, regardless of the type of work that is to be undertaken, although special rules will apply for construction work (including building maintenance).

In summary, the person instructing the contractor has a duty to:

- think carefully about what the work will involve
- check that the contractor is competent and
- provide any relevant information about the property to the contractor before work starts.

It is recommended that there are adequate arrangements in place for the monitoring and control of the work and, upon completion, reviewing the arrangements to determine if any improvements can be made in the future.

This can be broken down as follows in subsections 9.2–9.11.

## 9.2 Who or what is a contractor?

In this professional standard, the term ‘contractor’ is used to include any person or organisation that is not a direct employee but is contracted to work on premises under the RICS-regulated firm’s or RICS member’s control or to carry out work on the RICS-regulated firm’s or RICS member’s behalf.

Appointment is by a signed contract, specifying terms and conditions of work, which could be a formal written contract document or a set of terms submitted as part of a quotation for work that is then accepted by way of signature by the instructing party.

Before signing any contract or accepting terms, ensure the specifics of the agreement and the scope and liabilities that it details are understood. If in any doubt, seek specialist advice.

Companies or individuals such as floor planners, signage erectors or photographers are also contractors, although their activities normally present minimal risk.

The term ‘contractor’ is not intended to include companies or individuals delivering goods (postal workers, resident/tenant deliveries, groceries, emergency services, enforcement officers, etc.), although RICS-regulated firms and RICS members will, proportionate to their management responsibilities, have a general duty of care to these individuals.

## 9.3 Why contract work?

The primary reason for taking on a contractor is normally to obtain a specialist skill or knowledge that an RICS member does not have in-house. In fact, by undertaking work directly without being able to demonstrate competency, an RICS member may be increasing their liability.

Appointing a contractor to undertake a task cannot be seen as delegation of legal duty. If an RICS member has responsibility for managing a property or site, this includes a duty to ensure the activities that are carried out under their control do not result in the injury or harm of any person.

## 9.4 Principles of good contractor procurement

There are essentially four requirements that an RICS member needs to follow to ensure that they have effective contractor control. The four elements cover the whole of the contracting process, from appointment through to completion of the works themselves. See subsections 9.4.1–9.4.4.

### 9.4.1 Ensure the contractors are competent

When appointing a contractor it is essential they have the necessary health and safety competence (skills, knowledge and experience) to carry out the required role without putting

themselves or others at unnecessary risk. This is determined by evaluating professional qualifications, skills and experience. Also ensure the contractor can demonstrate that they have adequate arrangements for the management of health and safety.

The amount of due diligence required depends on the complexity of the tasks required and associated risks. Basic checks that should be carried out for any contractor are detailed in subsections 9.4.2–9.4.4.

### 9.4.2 Membership of a professional body

Most specialist industries have their own professional or trade body. Registering with a professional body or trade body often requires a contractor to complete a form of assessment or to demonstrate a specific level of competency. This provides an independent verification of a contractor's ability. This is not a requirement for all types of contractor but is a good indication of suitability. For some tasks, such as work with gas or electrical equipment, this may be set out in local law.

If it is determined that a particular task has a specific competency requirement (e.g. work at height or working with gas or electricity), make sure the individuals who will be undertaking the work satisfy this criteria, in addition to the entity (organisation) that employs them.

### 9.4.3 Insurance

Always ensure that a contractor has adequate insurance. This includes employer's liability (casualty) insurance, public liability and professional indemnity insurances. The amount required will be proportionate to the scale of contract, but it is sensible to set a minimum expectation. RICS-regulated firms and RICS members should ensure that they understand any minimum insurance limits stipulated by clients.

### 9.4.4 References

References from other current or recent employers are always a strong indication of performance, giving confidence that the contractor is able to deliver a good standard of work. There are likely to be numerous online sites that can be used to source local contractors based on reference. Always make sure that the references provided are recent (at least within the last 12 months). It is also worth taking the time to follow up on references, particularly for larger contracts. Speaking directly to a referee gives a good picture of how a contractor operates and enables specific questions to be asked about areas of concern.

For larger or more specific work, it may be necessary to complete a more thorough tender. This is likely to include specific questions to determine whether a contractor has the specific skills and experience required. Within a formal tender the following should be considered:

- health and safety policies and procedures
- examples of risk assessments, evidence of safe systems of work (method statements and potentially permit to work regimes)

- past health and safety performance, usually by analysing accidents and incident statistics and
- any enforcement or prosecutions that may have been taken against the contractor (or potentially their subcontractors). Request data from the previous five years, or longer if the complexity of the work activities requires exceptional due diligence.

## 9.5 Identifying the job

Consider the particular skills required for the whole scope of the work, bearing in mind the detail of what is to be done.

Any tender information or information issued by way of a request for information (RFI) should include as much detail as is available and, in particular, details of any inherent hazards or site rules that have to be adhered to – both these matters may affect the levels of health and safety competence (skills, knowledge and experience) that the contractor will need to undertake the work safely.

## 9.6 Management of contractors

Having identified the job and the range of skills required, any potential contractor is required to have a sufficient level of competence (including health and safety competence) for the work. Review whether they can provide appropriate evidence of the following matters detailed in subsections 9.6.1–9.6.3 (refer too to subsection 9.4).

### 9.6.1 Approved contractor lists

Many RICS-regulated firms choose to use an ‘approved contractors’ list, onto which contractors are added once their competence has been checked and copies of supporting documents have been obtained. Checks may also need to be undertaken with regard to competence and resources for specific activities.

Where an approved list system is in place it is important to recognise that selecting a contractor as ‘suitable’ to be added to the list does not infer they are necessarily appropriate for every job they are asked to consider. It is of great importance that the full range of checks are made again in relation to the specific job, contract or work activity(ies).

### 9.6.2 Arrangements for managing subcontractors

For larger jobs, contractors may need to subcontract certain elements, or simply increase the number of workers available. The subcontractor selected may not have the same focus on health and safety as the main contractor, meaning that the information provided by the main contractor may not turn out to be a true reflection of how they propose to operate on this contract.

Specify during the selection/tendering process whether subcontracting is acceptable and, if so, stipulate any conditions. Request information from the contractor about how they will select and manage their subcontractors. The prospective contractor should have similar

selection and management criteria in place for any subcontractors working for them, as well as arrangements for communicating health and safety information and supervision of the activities undertaken by the subcontractors.

### 9.6.3 Membership of recognised competency assessment schemes

There are a number of professional schemes available that can be used for, or provide an indication of, competency in health and safety management (e.g. ISO 45001 *Occupational health and safety*).

By demonstrating membership of recognised and accredited schemes, contractors provide a level of reassurance that they have a robust health and safety management system. These do not, however, provide evidence for task-specific information, so it may not be appropriate to rely on these in all situations.

## 9.7 Discuss details before issuing instructions

The person instructing the contractor is likely to know more about the property and therefore has a duty to pass on any relevant information to the contractor. This will allow the contractor to plan the work safely.

Consider what the contractor will want to know about the property before starting work. For example:

- What are the induction arrangements?
- Who else will be at the premises? Who are they, what will they be doing and when?
- Where are the electricity, gas and water services located?
- Is there any asbestos or other hazardous materials at the site (or in the land)?
- What rest or wash facilities are there?
- Where can vehicles and equipment be left?
- What are the emergency arrangements?

At this point, the contractor should be able to price the job accurately regarding health and safety issues and a decision can be made as to whether or not to instruct them.

## 9.8 Make sure others will not be put at risk

The general expectations about the performance of a contractor should have been made clear during the selection or tendering process. Once this has been completed and a contractor appointed, these expectations need to be properly defined.

Try to clearly define health and safety responsibilities with the contractor in advance as, in some cases, they may have an impact on time or cost. It may be appropriate to express these as part of a contract, or as a set of site rules that any contractor should be expected to comply with. Considerations include the requirements for:



- interaction with other occupiers, and/or their operations (if any occupiers)
- disposal of waste
- emergency arrangements
- hours of work
- maintaining fire escape routes
- minimising noise, dust and unpleasant odours
- reporting of accidents
- segregation and responsibility for work areas
- sign in/out procedures
- site security and
- storage of materials.

Before any work is permitted to begin on site, appropriately complex risk assessment and method statements should be requested from the contractor. The documents received should be specific to both the work required and to the site itself. It is likely that elements of the assessment could be applied to any similar situation; however, a wholly generic document is not acceptable. For complex tasks, contractors will need to visit the property in advance to prepare an accurate assessment and plan their work activities.

The accompanying work plan (or method statement) should demonstrate how the work will be carried out and how the associated significant risks will be overcome. Effectively, a method statement is a step-by-step set of instructions for completing the work. This document should also be site- and job-specific. It usually includes:

- site set-up requirements and security arrangements
- site safety, fire and emergency arrangements
- reference to any specific controls that need to be put in place before work begins
- reference to the risk assessment
- the equipment required and how it should be transported, delivered, unloaded and stored
- any specific sequence that has to be followed to complete the work
- arrangements for clearance of the site and disposal of waste
- any checks that have to be carried out before leaving the site and
- any documentation that needs to be completed or left on site.

While the RICS member needs to satisfy themselves that the documents provided are sufficient, it is important to emphasise that it is not their role to specify the exact method of work or dictate means of control that a contractor will follow. Ultimately, this is the competency that is being paid for. The RICS member's responsibility is to ensure the

contractor has considered the relevant risks and has applied controls that are appropriate for the site and the work.

Ensure the person given the responsibility of any kind of document review has the necessary understanding of the site, risk and control and the work activity(ies) to be undertaken. The very fact that there is a need to appoint a company or individual with a specialist skill means the RICS member is unlikely to understand all of the risks associated with a particular task. However, it should be possible to recognise that the main risk areas have been identified by the contractor and suitable controls will be put in place. For complex tasks that extend beyond the routine tasks instructed by an RICS member, it may be necessary to seek further specialist advice.

If work is likely to affect occupiers directly, or the activities of occupiers are likely to affect the contractors, it is important that occupiers are notified in advance and any restrictions they need to adhere to or disruption to building services are explained. Any objections or concerns raised by occupiers can then be addressed in advance, which will allow the work to be carried out more smoothly. When communicating with occupiers the following needs to be considered:

- temporary changes to emergency procedures
- contractors' working hours and access required into occupied areas
- any areas that cannot be accessed during the work and alternative arrangements
- requirements for occupiers to keep particular areas clear or refrain from certain activities
- alterations to normal routines; for example, rubbish collection
- any impact (temporary disconnection or isolation) on building services or utilities and
- potential noise, dust or fumes.

It may be necessary to reinforce certain restrictions or temporary changes with on-site signage.

Third parties may also need to be notified of some works and/or their permission sought for the following:

- isolation of utilities or services that affect multiple tenants will require the permission of the block manager or head leaseholder (when not undertaken by an RICS member acting on behalf of the owner/landlord)
- the presence of children, pets or other vulnerable tenants including access to any construction or work site
- the location of pipes or cables that could be damaged during the work and
- any lack of lighting.

This information will allow the contractor and RICS member to finalise details associated with the scope and timescale of works, responsibility for work areas, coordinate activity taking place in a property and any temporary alterations required to building operations

and emergency procedures. The RICS member may remain responsible for the building as a whole so is required to ensure activities are coordinated; for example, the property-specific fire management arrangements.

The information provided and controls agreed should be reflected in risk assessments and method statements.

Where works require access to areas of the (or an adjacent) property that are not under the direct control of the RICS member, relevant information should be requested from the controlling parties (e.g. superior landlord, other agents, neighbours, other occupiers or residents). Where there is no or limited knowledge about hazards, this needs to be communicated to the contractors so that they can investigate and proceed with appropriate precautions.

Time needs to be allowed for investigative surveys, such as asbestos, despite the impact on the programme.

## 9.9 Monitor the work

Arrangements should be confirmed for ongoing monitoring of the work, including use of the correct materials (e.g. related to fire safety components of the property), provision for regular meetings, site visits or any other methods necessary to supervise the work effectively.

The extent of the arrangements needed will increase with the size and complexity of the job. Furthermore, a new contractor will require greater oversight than a contractor who is familiar with both the property and the work, and who has demonstrated safe and effective working methods in the past.

Monitoring is about ensuring that the controls and work methods proposed or agreed with a contractor have been put into effect. It is not about direct supervision of works: that remains the responsibility of the contractor (a supervisor). The amount of monitoring carried out depends on a number of factors, such as:

- the familiarity of and confidence in the contractor
- the complexity of the work and the potential for accidents or uncontrolled risks
- the location of the works and the impact on a building or its occupants, or adjacent premises and
- any history of failures or accidents.

When monitoring, the RICS member may wish to seek evidence that:

- site rules are being adhered to
- risk assessments/method statements are being followed
- permits to work are being adhered to
- individuals working on site are competent to do so

- there is management supervision by the contractor
- work areas are segregated
- waste is being managed and
- equipment is being stored appropriately.

It is advised that any monitoring is recorded as evidence of an active contractor management process.

Action should always be taken immediately if poor practices are identified or if the RICS member is informed of concerns by others. Action should be proportionate to the level of risk. In turn this may mean that increased monitoring is required to ensure standards are then maintained. In cases where there has been a blatant disregard of risk:

- 1 work should be stopped
- 2 the area should be made safe and
- 3 the contractor should be removed from site.

## 9.10 Ensure risks from contractors' activities are controlled and coordinated

Cooperation is necessary to ensure safe working. For contractors to manage risk properly and fulfil their own legal duties, they need to take certain steps and put their own control measures in place. If multiple contractors are asked to work together, the RICS member needs to ensure they are not adversely affected by each other's activities. Steps may need to be taken to:

- facilitate communication between contractors
- coordinate contractors' activities so that they are each able to work safely
- assist contractors to resolve health and safety issues and implement control measures and
- ensure coordinated fire/emergency evacuation procedures.

These matters can also have an impact on time and cost. It is important that project deadlines allow for identified risks and, if previously unknown hazards are identified, work programmes are adapted to allow these to be properly controlled.

Whether there is one or multiple contractors working, it is important to clarify any site rules that have to be adhered to. For larger contracts most matters are likely to already have been discussed, but for smaller reactive or maintenance tasks these may need to be specified on the day. Site rules always need to be specific to a property. Typically, they include requirements relating to:

- use of barriers and segregation of work areas
- keeping exit routes clear

- noise restrictions
- sign in/out procedures
- leaving work areas tidy (potentially with specific consideration of children)
- use of lifts and transport of materials
- emergency procedures and assembly point locations
- site security and use of identification badges
- protection of fixtures and fittings
- availability of documents (risk assessments, proof of competency, etc.) and
- supervision of works.

For works of a particularly hazardous nature or in work areas with high risks the use of a permit to work should be considered as a part of the control process. A permit to work is a document, issued by a competent person in authority, to allow a specific (higher risk) work activity to be carried out in an agreed manner. The permit should stipulate the work area, time and duration of works and specific controls that have to be implemented. Typical uses of permits to work include:

- work with three-phase or high voltage electrical equipment
- work involving asbestos, or where there is a risk of disturbing asbestos
- hot works (e.g. welding, soldering, etc.)
- work on unprotected roofs or at height
- isolation of life safety systems (fire alarm, sprinklers, etc.) and
- isolation of communal plant for significant periods (lifts, boilers).

When using permits to work it is essential that the person issuing the permit has sufficient knowledge about the risks of the work and the controls that need to be in place to be satisfied that a suitable work method has been proposed. Permits may often include controls set by the RICS member.

Permit systems should provide an end-to-end process so that, on conclusion of the work activity, there is a check that the work is completed and no residual risks remain. If work is incomplete and an area is unsafe to access or equipment should remain isolated, this has to be actively managed until the work can be completed under an extended or new permit.

The responsible person (e.g. contractor/RICS member) should be able to show that permit-to-work systems are actively managed and not just a bureaucratic process.

Permits can often be overused and confused with an authorisation to access. An authorisation to access is normally used to indicate to on-site staff, residents or others that a contractor has been given permission to enter and work in a specific area. This is particularly beneficial for sites controlled remotely or with only front of house staff present. However, authorisation to access is not intended as a safety control.

There is an expectation that all contractors will follow site rules precisely at all times. If they do not, they should be held fully liable for the consequences. But this should not be relied on; there is a responsibility to ensure that the control measures put in place are both adhered to and are effective.

## 9.11 Review the arrangements

On completing the work, it is recommended that the person who instructed the contractor reviews the arrangements in order to establish whether any lessons can be learned from the process, and whether any changes are needed to the arrangements for the selection and control of contractors.

# Appendix A: Example audit template

Appendix A provides:

- a suggested audit template scoring system and
- a high-level RICS-regulated firm health and safety audit.

This audit template is a non-mandatory aid for the auditing of your RICS-regulated firm's health and safety practices.

This sets out a basic template for auditing an RICS-regulated firm's health and safety management. It provides an RICS-regulated firm with a basic audit of their business in relation to the management of health and safety.

The template is deliberately 'high level' in order to assist smaller and non-complex RICS-regulated firms that employ RICS members to undertake smaller and non-complex duties or commissions. It is important to note that the competence of the assessor has to be considered carefully. For larger or more complex RICS-regulated firms or for firms that undertake larger and/or more complex commissions, the competence of a technical health and safety expert may be necessary. If the RICS-regulated firm is delivering particularly complex or specialist commissions, a subject-matter expert with technical health and safety competence may be required to undertake an effective audit.

A scoring system of 0–5 is used to provide a more balanced view of compliance rather than a simple yes or no. This is deemed more useful to members in assessing their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the management of the health and safety of their employees and jobs/commissions.

The legal obligations of RICS-regulated firms will be dependent on the jurisdiction in which they are based and/or where their work is undertaken, and a more detailed audit of jurisdiction-specific legal compliance may be required in addition to the matters raised in the template.

## Scoring system

Score	
5	<b>85%–100% fully compliant:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activity undertaken</li> <li>• training in place</li> <li>• documentation appropriate and current.</li> </ul>
4	<b>75%–84% compliant:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activity undertaken</li> <li>• training evidenced</li> <li>• documentation in place but out of date.</li> </ul>
3	<b>50%–74% compliant:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activity undertaken</li> <li>• no documentation</li> <li>• inadequate training.</li> </ul>
2	<b>20%–49% compliant:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some action evidenced</li> <li>• inadequate training/inappropriate and/or no training.</li> </ul>
1	<b>1%–19%:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no action evidenced.</li> </ul>
0	<b>0% N/A (no/null score):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not appropriate within this organisation.</li> </ul>



## High-level RICS-regulated firm health and safety audit example template

### 1 Personal responsibilities for RICS members and corporate responsibility for RICS-regulated firms

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
1.1 Influencing factors	If the RICS-regulated firm operates in more than one jurisdiction, is there evidence that it has considered its responsibilities under all health and safety-related laws in each of the jurisdictions that it operates in?	
	Where appropriate, can the RICS-regulated firm provide evidence of access to competent health and safety advice, including health, safety and environment-related legal advice, in each relevant jurisdiction?	
	Does the RICS-regulated firm have, or is it working towards, any recognised standards (ISO 45001 <i>Occupational health and safety</i> , or potentially ISO 14001 <i>Environmental management</i> , or ISO 9001 <i>Quality management</i> or PAS 99 ( <i>Integrated management systems</i> )) or any locally recognised accreditation systems?	
1.2 Personal responsibilities	Are the individual health and safety obligations/responsibilities of each level of staff (i.e. at differing levels of seniority) clearly set out in either their contracts or a policy, in procedure documents or in the arrangements for the health and safety management system?	
	Is there evidence that staff understand and comply with their individual obligations? Ask/assess at least three people at differing levels of seniority.	
1.3 'Safe person' concept	Is there evidence that organisational responsibilities have been addressed?	
	Is there evidence that individual responsibilities have been addressed?	
1.4 Corporate responsibilities	Is there evidence of a formal health and safety management system for the RICS-regulated firm? Evidence includes a current organogram.	

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
	Is there evidence that the RICS-regulated firm and those with responsibility for health and safety have a full understanding of the relevant health and safety legislation that may affect their organisation within their home jurisdiction?	
	In the event the RICS-regulated firm operates outside its home jurisdiction, does the health and safety management system adequately include for legal requirements of the foreign jurisdictions?	
	Is there a health and safety policy statement?	
	Are there adequate health and safety procedures/rules?	
	Are the statement/procedures/rules available to all employees?	
	Is there evidence of all employees undertaking appropriate health and safety training related to their work activities?	
	Is there appropriate and current insurance cover in place? Check legal requirements according to all jurisdictions in which the RICS-regulated firm operates.	
1.5 In the event that it 'all goes wrong'	Does the RICS-regulated firm record all injuries, and/or non-injury events (e.g. near miss/practice fire evacuations)?	
	Does the RICS-regulated firm investigate causes of incidents and act on any remedial actions recommended from the investigation?	
	Does the RICS-regulated firm have processes in place to effect a roll-call in the event of a major incident?	
	Does the RICS-regulated firm have in place counselling or other support for distressed personnel?	
	Is there clarity on disciplinary protocols for breaches of health and safety rules?	

## 2 Relevance to RICS professional groups

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
	Is there evidence that the RICS-regulated firm has considered health and safety risks that are specific to its professional discipline (in addition to the principles of health and safety set out in this professional standard)? Evidence includes access to or involvement with health and safety matters relating to its RICS professional group.	

## 3 Assessing hazards and risks

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
3.1 Risk management	Is there any organisational policy or procedure written down to explain the RICS-regulated firm's method of risk management?	
3.2 Concepts of managing risk	Is there a good high-level understanding by managers (senior and line) as to what significant risks the RICS-regulated firm, its employees and those affected by its undertaking are potentially exposed to?	
3.3 Working safely as an RICS-regulated firm and RICS member	Is there evidence identifying the need for risk assessment of health and safety issues wherever appropriate (i.e. site specific, task specific, specific to the individual)? A different focus may be necessary to assess differing risk environments.	
3.4 Assessing risk	Is there evidence of risk assessment being undertaken in all areas where significant potential risks have been identified?	
	Are there any templates used (if so, are they suitable and sufficient, signed, dated and do they include controls and any recommendations for developing safe methods of working)? Refer to the global professional standard on what needs to be considered for a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.	
	Is there evidence of reviewing risk assessments where this may be appropriate?	

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
3.5 Hierarchy of risk	Is there evidence that the hierarchy of risk is used to manage risks to work activities?	
3.6 Dynamic risk assessment	Is there a policy or procedure to instruct employees on when, and how, to undertake a dynamic risk assessment?	
	Are there any tools to assist the employees?	
	Are there any training records in regard to dynamic risk assessment?	
3.7 Evaluating risk	Have all appropriate staff been adequately trained in undertaking/understanding risk assessment? Is there evidence of appropriate training?	
	Are appropriately competent persons undertaking the assessments? Review no less than five 'live' risk assessments for evidence.	
	Do the five risk assessments include identification of inherent risks and methods for managing the identified risks down to acceptable levels?	
	Is there evidence that those affected by the risks have been consulted in the assessment?	
	Is there evidence that all affected by work activities are fully informed of the attendant risks, have been given any other relevant information and are appropriately trained to undertake the work safely?	

## 4 RICS members' places of work

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
4.1 General	Is there evidence that consideration has been given to identify all the various places/conditions/locations that staff may be required to undertake work? Consider too if temporary access platforms/ladders/scaffolds, etc. may be used.	
	Is driving of cars (for the purposes of undertaking work activities) identified as a potential risk activity? And if so, is there a driving policy?	
	Is driving, operating, or use of other vehicles (e.g. cranes, mobile platforms, lorries, tractors, etc., for the purposes of undertaking work activities) identified as a potential risk? If so, are appropriate risk assessments/procedures requiring assessment of risk/development of safe methods of work in place?	
4.2 Perception and behaviours	Is there evidence (i.e. within risk assessments) that consideration is given to an individual's personal characteristics (e.g. age/physical ability/language/experience/fitness, etc.) when considering who has the competence, characteristics and experience to undertake specific work activities?	
4.3 Geographical location	Has appropriate consideration been given to geographic locations/circumstances (and potentially geology) when developing safe working arrangements (e.g. excessive heat/cold, proximity to deep or running water and any local statutory requirements related to such locations/conditions)?	
4.4 Historical use	Where appropriate, is there evidence that the former use of a site has been considered when developing safe working procedures? For example, could there be contaminations on the site from previous use?	
4.5 Immediate locality	Is there evidence that potential risks presented by the wider proximate environment were taken into consideration when developing safe working procedures? Review some risk assessments by way of gaining evidence.	

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
4.6 Risk identification and management	Request and review the evidence provided for a specific site/project to assess whether the risks have been appropriately identified, safe working methods have been developed and those potentially affected have been informed/trained as appropriate.	
4.7 Common requirements at places of work	Review a specific working location/site and review the provisions for welfare – are they sufficient for those working there?	
	Are there adequate clean toilets with hot/cold handwashing facilities for both male and female personnel?	
	Is there adequate provision of clean (potable) drinking water?	
	Is there adequate light to undertake the work activities?	
	Are there sufficient first aid and emergency arrangements in place (including adequately trained first aid providers)?	
	Is there appropriate immediate access to competent health and safety advice for all staff?	
4.8 Emergency arrangements	Is adequate detection/alarms of fire/smoke/heat in place?	
	Are carbon monoxide (CO) detectors/alarms in place where CO gases may be able to build up and threaten life?	
	Are arrangements in place for emergency evacuation, and are such arrangements well known/posted on noticeboards?	
4.9 Building services	Where the workplace is a permanent (or semi-permanent) place of work, are building services such as water hygiene, lifting equipment and air conditioning equipment serviced? Request and review evidence of testing and work sheets, and consider whether local statutory obligations are being complied with.	

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
4.10 Maintenance of buildings	Is there evidence that the fabric/structure of permanent/ semi-permanent places of work is checked adequately for condition?	
4.11 Fixed equipment	Where there may be fixed equipment (including, e.g. man-safe and lanyard systems, window cleaning/ maintenance cradles and fixed ladders, building cladding, signage, etc.), is there evidence that these are checked, maintained, tested (where appropriate) and compliant with local statutory requirements? Review test certificates, inspection and worksheets.	

## 5 Occupational hygiene and health

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
5.1 Occupational hygiene	Does the RICS-regulated firm refer to occupational hygiene risks in its health and safety policy document?	
	Is there a nominated person who is responsible for monitoring occupational hygiene matters for personnel and for keeping associated records?	
	Are monitoring records up to date and do they address areas relevant to personnel?	
5.2 Occupational health	Does the RICS-regulated firm refer to occupational health risks in its health and safety policy document?	
	Is there a nominated person who is responsible for monitoring occupational health matters for personnel and for keeping associated records?	
	Are monitoring records up to date and do they address areas relevant to personnel?	
5.2.1 Work-related stress	Are risk control measures in place based on the management standards?	
	Have personnel been provided with information about work-related stress, how to recognise it, and what action to take?	
	Have managers been briefed on how to identify potential problems with personnel and what action to take?	
	Are measurable indices used to monitor work-related stress factors such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sickness absence days</li> <li>• staff appraisals</li> <li>• hours worked</li> <li>• incident reports and</li> <li>• an anonymous staff suggestions system?</li> </ul>	



Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
5.2.2 Health, well-being and mental health	Has the RICS-regulated firm recognised the need for management of health and well-being? Are there any processes or policies in place to investigate and manage ill health and/or threats to good mental health of employees?	
5.2.3 Violence, bullying and harassment	Are personnel able to talk in confidence to a person within the RICS-regulated firm who is not their line manager?	
5.2.4 Alcohol and drug misuse	Are policies for alcohol and drugs in place within the RICS-regulated firm?	
	Do personnel lead by example in terms of responsible alcohol consumption during work events?	
5.2.5 Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)	Have personnel undertaken manual handling training?	
	Have any incidents of work-related musculoskeletal disorders been adequately investigated and any necessary remedial action taken?	
	Have workstation assessments been carried out for users of workstations?	
	Have risk assessments been carried out for users of laptop computers and the risks explained to them?	
	Are musculoskeletal disorders that arise from work activities recorded in the RICS-regulated firm's accident book?	
5.2.6 Noise-induced hearing damage	Have the risks arising from noise exposure been explained to personnel who may be exposed to noisy environments and is there a record of briefings or training?	
	Has appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment; ear defenders or ear plugs) been provided to personnel who work in noisy environments?	
	Do risk assessment records for the RICS-regulated firm record the risks and the control measures relating to noise-induced hearing damage?	

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
5.2.7 Asbestos	Have personnel who may be exposed to asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) and those who instruct such personnel undertaken asbestos-awareness training within the last 12 months?	
	Is there an asbestos-management plan in place for the RICS-regulated firm's own premises and is it used actively as a management document?	
	Do relevant personnel understand what to do if previously unidentified ACMs are found?	
5.2.8 Hazardous substances	Does the RICS-regulated firm refer to procedures for controlling exposure to hazardous substances in its health and safety policy document?	
	Are risk assessments in place for hazardous substances to which personnel may be exposed?	
5.2.9 Diseases	Have personnel who may be exposed to disease risks been provided with appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) and are there records of such PPE having been issued and subsequently checked?	
	Does the RICS-regulated firm have procedures in place for addressing legionella hazards arising from the firm's work activities that personnel or third parties may be exposed to?	
	Is there evidence of risk-management procedures being implemented (inspection records, site-specific risk assessments, training records, etc.)?	
5.2.10 Biosecurity	Have personnel who may come into contact with biohazards been given relevant training or briefings and are there records of such measures?	
	Have such personnel been provided with appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) and are there records of PPE having been issued and subsequently checked?	
5.2.11 New and expectant mothers	Does the RICS-regulated firm refer to procedures for controlling risks for new and expectant mothers in its health and safety policy document?	

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
	Are personnel-specific risk assessments in place for new and expectant mothers?	
5.2.12 Sun protection	Have risk assessments for personnel adequately addressed the risks arising from exposure to the sun and is there a record of such assessments and any necessary control measures?	
5.2.13 Environmental factors	Does the workplace exhibit any environmental risk factors such as extremes of temperature, high noise levels or poor lighting and, if so, have suitable measures been taken to control the risks?	
5.2.14 Health monitoring and health surveillance	Have personnel provided occupational health details so that the RICS-regulated firm can take any risk factors into account when planning work activities for individuals?	
	Have personnel undertaken eye tests within the last two years?	
	Is occupational health information stored confidentially?	

## 6 Visiting premises or sites

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
6.1 Before visiting premises or sites	Does the RICS-regulated firm have the necessary procedures in place, including a list of matters that need to be considered, for making a pre-assessment for the site visit?	
6.2 Checklist of matters to consider	Have the listed matters been considered? Have other relevant matters particular to this site been considered?	
6.3 Arriving and during visits to premises or at sites	Do the RICS-regulated firm's procedures include a requirement to reassess a site on arrival (checking against the original risk assessment) and to continually reassess while on site?	
	Has the RICS-regulated firm's employee carried out such checks, including checking for hazards (such as those outlined in subsections 6.3.1 to 6.3.14)?	
	Has the RICS-regulated firm's employee noted any significant risks on site?	
	Has the employee reported any such significant risks noted during the site visit to an appropriate person (e.g. building owner, occupier or site manager)?	
6.4 Securing the site and leaving	On completing the visit, did the employee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• secure the property</li> <li>• inform any occupier or manager present at the property that s/he was leaving and</li> <li>• inform someone at their office or home about their movements?</li> </ul>	

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
6.5 Review on completion of the visit	<p>Has an assessment been carried out to ascertain whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are any lessons learned</li> <li>• any changes should be made to company procedures</li> <li>• any hazards on the property need to be notified to the property manager for remedial action and</li> <li>• any accidents, incidents or near-miss occurrences need to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– entered into the company/RICS-regulated firm’s accident book and</li> <li>– notified to the occupier or manager of the property?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

## 7 Fire safety

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
	Has the RICS-regulated firm got access to the appropriate competence to assess and manage fire risk within its work activities?	
	Are any fire risks that could affect the RICS-regulated firm's business operations identified, assessed and well managed?	
	Has the RICS-regulated firm assessed fire risk within all areas under its control?	
	Does the RICS-regulated firm practice fire evacuation (including for vulnerable or less mobile personnel) at its office locations at least twice per annum?	
	Has the RICS-regulated firm got adequate, appropriate and current documentation setting out fire safety management arrangements?	

## 8 Residential property surveying

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
	<i>Only assess where the RICS-regulated firm is responsible for management of residential property.</i>	
	Has the RICS-regulated firm got access to appropriate competent advice in relation to health and safety risks associated with residential accommodation?	
	Have fire risk assessments been carried out and are they up to date at all the individual residential properties?	
	Are appropriate risk-management strategies operational at the individual residential properties?	
	Are appropriate records easily available to evidence operational risk management procedures at the individual residential properties?	

## 9 General procurement and management of contractors

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
	Competence: is there a system to ensure that the competence (skills, knowledge and experience) of the contractor has been assessed? This may include membership of an appropriate trade body, or taking references from previous clients.	
	Has the nature and extent of the work activity(ies) been defined and any hazards associated with the works identified?	
	Where there are significant hazards associated with the work, has information been provided to contractors as to the nature of these hazards and the level of risk associated with these tasks?	
	Have all appointments, including any required by law, been confirmed in writing (letter or formal contract)?	
	<i>Insurances</i> Have checks been made to ensure that the contractor has adequate insurances in place that reflect the nature of the works to be undertaken?	
	<i>Management of the works</i> Are suitable arrangements in place to ensure that the works are properly managed, including compliance with statutory requirements, and that suitable controls are in place?	
	Are arrangements in place for monitoring the works and reviewing contractors' performance?	

Chapter/section	Evidence required	Score
<p><b>Legal considerations and duties (refer to appropriate RICS jurisdictional guide)</b></p>	<p>Does the RICS-regulated firm (and/or any relevant RICS member) have ready access to, and good knowledge of, statutory health and safety matters, according to all relevant jurisdictional influences? Further audit of this information may be deemed appropriate if the organisation is subject to RICS regulatory audit, or audit by local enforcement officials or international standard awarding bodies (e.g. International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO)).</p>	
	<p>Does the RICS-regulated firm have ready access to, and good knowledge of, the statutory obligations relating to its work activities in all the jurisdictions where the work is undertaken?</p> <p>By way of evidence, a current and complete legal register may be requested and reviewed. Alternatively, access to competent health and safety advice, including information on legal obligations and how these affect the RICS-regulated firms work activities, may be reviewed and assessed.</p> <p>It may also be expected that senior managers receive updated legal information and training at least every two years – request evidence of this.</p> <p>Additionally, it may be expected that operational health and safety advisers regularly maintain continuous professional development, and that operatives and managers are provided with health and safety and updated related legal training at least every two years and whenever a change in statutory health and obligations affect their work activities.</p>	



## Delivering confidence

We are RICS. Everything we do is designed to effect positive change in the built and natural environments. Through our respected global standards, leading professional progression and our trusted data and insight, we promote and enforce the highest professional standards in the development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our work with others provides a foundation for confident markets, pioneers better places to live and work and is a force for positive social impact.

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