
Guidance on the provision of Welfare facilities for asbestos work

GN009-V0715-Welfare facilities for asbestos work

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GUIDANCE ON THE PROVISION OF WELFARE FACILITIES FOR ASBESTOS WORK

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This explains the legal requirements regarding ‘welfare facilities’. Some contractors may not recognise the extent of legal duties: many plans of work fail to fully address welfare provision, or make reference to the use of ‘nearby cafes’ or public conveniences. Complete welfare-provision often requires good cooperation, coordination and communication between client, contractor and principal contractor etc. Furthermore, the transitional, short-term nature of asbestos work may present challenges.
- 1.2 The basic legal requirements are very well defined and have been in place for a long time. This means that any failure to provide adequate welfare could have serious implications for HSE’s confidence in a contractors’ general management arrangements.

2. KEY POINTS

What are ‘welfare facilities’?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets & washing facilities • Rest areas (incorporating a place for preparing hot drinks & eating food) • Access to drinking water • Changing rooms & lockers (where workers need to change into special clothing)
Whose responsibility are they?	<p>All contractors need to ensure that there are adequate facilities for workers under their control.</p> <p>In many cases, welfare provision will require cooperation and coordination between a number of different organisations. This coordination needs to be clearly addressed at the planning stage.</p>

3. “WELFARE” AND HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015) place specific duties on contractors, clients and others involved in construction work. The definition of ‘construction work’ is very broad and will include asbestos removal tasks (licensed and non-licensed). For example, it includes, alteration, conversion, fitting out, commissioning, renovation, repair, upkeep, redecoration or other maintenance (including cleaning which involves the use of water or an abrasive at high pressure, or the use of corrosive or toxic substances), de-commissioning, demolition or dismantling.
- 3.2 Schedule 2 of CDM 2015 describes the minimum welfare facilities required for all construction sites. Welfare requirements on contractors will apply regardless of whether or not the project is CDM 2015 “notifiable”.

- 3.3 A company's approach to arranging welfare provision needs to consider:
- The type of work being carried out
 - The number of workers and work location
 - Cleaning and maintenance responsibilities and regimes
- 3.4 A 'suitable and sufficient' plan of work for licensed asbestos removal will identify where / how facilities are to be provided. General / generic statements (e.g. "Welfare to be provided by client") do not explain what site teams should expect on site.
- 3.5 It follows that site assessors, planners, supervisors and auditors / visiting managers need to understand the minimum standards for welfare provision and take welfare facilities into account when considering workplace transport and other 'access' or site management issues. In addition:
- The company's training and / or general procedures need to cover welfare requirements.
 - The company's general arrangements for monitoring performance must also look at welfare provision; 'audits' (or 'senior management tours') etc. should expect to identify where welfare provision does not meet the minimum legal standard.

4. WELFARE FACILITIES – BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 Any reference to something 'provided, or made available' means that the facility is in a readily accessible, suitable location. For example, a toilet that is 'made available' but is a 30-minute walk away is unlikely to be considered readily accessible. (Where possible there should be separate facilities for men and women - failing that, rooms with lockable doors.)
- 4.2 Toilets & washing facilities
- 4.2.1 Rooms containing washing facilities and toilets must be kept clean and orderly; they must be adequately ventilated and lit. A 'suitable and sufficient' number of toilets must be provided, or made available. This will depend on the number of workers and the type of toilet provided. For example, the Health & Safety Executive guidance recommends that no more than 7 persons should be expected to use a single portable toilet where it is being emptied on a weekly basis.
- 4.2.2 Washing facilities will include showers for very dirty or hazardous work and these will be separate from general washing facilities. Sinks should be large enough to wash face, hands and forearms. They must be provided in the immediate vicinity of every toilet. They should also be provided next to rest areas, where these are far from toilets. All washing facilities must include:
- Supply of hot and cold water
 - Soap, or similar
 - Towels, or other means of drying

4.3 Rest areas or rest rooms

4.3.1 Rest rooms or rest areas must be provided, or made available. These areas will:

- Have tables and chairs (with backs) to accommodate the number of people likely to use them at any one time
- Include facilities to prepare / eat meals, including a kettle (or similar)
- Be heated / ventilated as necessary to maintain a comfortable environment

4.4 Drinking Water

4.4.1 An adequate supply of drinking water must be provided, or made available. Cups (or similar) must also be provided, unless the water is provided from a drinking jet / fountain etc.

4.5 Changing rooms and lockers

4.5.1 Changing rooms must be provided in situations where workers need to change into special clothing and, for reasons of either health or propriety, they cannot be expected to change elsewhere. Changing rooms need to be equipped with seating and have places for workers to lock away clothing or personal effects.

5. DECONTAMINATION UNITS (DCUs) AS CHANGING AND WASHING FACILITIES

5.1 Where decontamination units are required for removal work, these should be capable of meeting the 'welfare' requirement for changing rooms and lockers. However, DCUs do not provide general washing facilities as defined above: use of the shower section of a DCU is subject to decontamination procedures and access is restricted to those working in asbestos areas. As mentioned above, washing facilities will be required with/ near toilets (and rest areas, if these are a long way from toilets).

5.2 For asbestos removal work not requiring a DCU (i.e. non-licensed works) specific changing rooms are not required, as asbestos coveralls are generally worn over work clothing.

6. SMALL SCALE / SHORT-DURATION ASBESTOS WORKS

6.1 There is HSE guidance on welfare provision for work that is completed in less than a week, or for 'transient' activities (such as a sequence of short tasks carried out across various locations in a particular geographical area). In such cases it is accepted that contractors make use of a "client's existing facilities, public facilities or local businesses". However, contractors need to be able to demonstrate that clear agreements have been made as part of planning for the work. In all cases workers must have facilities that are readily accessible (open at all relevant times), provided at no cost to workers and of an acceptable standard. In practice, it is unlikely that local businesses will offer such agreements.

- 6.2 The following table (from HSE guidance note CIS 59, see point 8 for link) gives an indication of welfare options for short duration / transient work, in order of preference. This guidance is aimed at general contractors: HSE will expect licensed contractors to be achieving best practice ('exemplary standards').

Type of Installation	Additional Notes
Fixed installation: connected to mains drainage and water.	Order of preference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On site • At a base location; • At a satellite compound NB This may include the pre-arranged use of private facilities. Permission, preferably in writing, should be obtained from the proprietor in advance of the work starting. The use of public toilets is acceptable only where it is impractical to provide or make available other facilities.
Portable water flushing units with water bowser supplies and waste storage tanks.	
Portable installation on site.	Consisting of chemical toilet(s), washing facilities and sufficient tables and seating.
Suitably designed vehicle.	Consisting of chemical toilet(s), washing facilities and sufficient tables and seating.
Facilities which are conveniently accessible to the worksite (includes public toilets).	Use of public toilets is acceptable only where it is impractical to provide or make available other facilities.
Portable installation near site.	Incorporating a chemical toilet, washing facilities and sufficient tables and seating.

6.3 Example Scenarios

Non-licensed textured-coating removal (small scale, e.g. as described in asbestos essentials)	2 workers on site for < 1 day	By arrangement with client, team use existing kitchen and bathroom areas for rest areas, hand-washing facilities and toilet*. NFA required.
Non-licensed textured coating removal, multiple rooms in domestic property.	3 workers on site, for 3-day job	By arrangement with client, team will use house's existing kitchen and bathroom areas for rest area, hand-washing facilities and toilet*. Additional shower facilities (for example, DCU) will be required due to the dirty nature of the work.
Small scale licensed AIB removal work.	3 workers on site, for 1-day job.	By arrangement, the plan designates rest areas and toilet / washing facilities in existing premises*. DCU provides shower, changing & locker facilities.
* In all cases, where existing rooms / facilities cannot be made available for the work, facilities will need to be hired / sourced elsewhere (see HSE table point 6.2).		

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7. RESPONSIBILITIES DEFINED IN THE CONSTRUCTION (DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT) REGULATIONS 2015 (CDM 2015)

- 7.1 There are links to sources of further information on CDM 2015, below. To summarise, responsibility for providing welfare may fall to multiple dutyholders:
- 7.1.1 Clients have an explicit duty to check that adequate welfare facilities are in place before work starts, AND
 - 7.1.2 Principal contractors must ensure that welfare facilities are provided throughout the construction phase, and that these are maintained and reviewed throughout the work, AND
 - 7.1.3 Individual contractors are responsible for planning and managing their work in order to comply with legal requirements. They must ensure adequate welfare arrangements are in place for their staff. For larger / more complex projects, contractors must coordinate their activities with others, particularly with the principal contractor and principal designer.
- 7.2 Cooperation and coordination with others is clearly very important. On multi-contractor sites, asbestos contractors need to ensure that welfare arrangements are properly explored and clarified at the planning stage.

8. SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

8.1 HSE Guidance

- [Construction Information Sheet 59 “Provision of welfare facilities during construction work”](#)
- [Construction Information Sheet 62 “Welfare Facilities: what you need to know as a busy builder”](#)
- [Welfare in Construction](#)
- [Construction welfare “frequently asked questions”](#)
- [Welfare at work \(INDG 293\) is guidance for non-construction situations.](#) It includes tables suggesting the minimum number of toilets / washbasins, dependent on number of people at work.

8.2 [General guidance on Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 \(CDM 2015\)](#)

8.3 [HSE’s guidance for inspectors](#)