

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Construction (Design & Management) Regulations (CDM) include the legal requirements associated with providing welfare facilities for construction work. Construction workers including scaffolders need adequate toilet and washing facilities, a place to warm up and eat food and somewhere to store clothing, keeping personal clothing separate from work clothing to avoid any contamination. Good facilities have a positive effect on the health of your workforce and are a basic requirement for every person at work. NASC members carry out scaffolding work in a variety of locations such as long-term major engineering sites, construction sites and short duration work on domestic properties. In addition, scaffolders may visit a number of locations on any particular day and can be called out to carry out emergency work at short notice.

Despite this wide range of work and the difficulties sometimes encountered in providing facilities, wherever an employee or person under your control is working, you, as the employer, must ensure that suitable welfare facilities and access to them are provided.

During the tender process you must consider the welfare facilities that will be available at the workplace. When working on fixed construction sites where facilities will be readily available it is the duty of the employer to identify who will be responsible for providing and maintaining those facilities. When working in other areas (e.g. Greenfield sites or domestic properties) you or your surveyor must consider what facilities could be available to your employees and the condition and maintenance of those facilities. As an employer you must not leave your employees to make their own arrangements.

*NOTE:* the NASC recommend that scaffold contractors brief their operatives not to enter domestic properties without formal prior agreement and controls, because of the risk of falsely being accused of theft etc.

### 2. FACILITIES ON FIXED CONSTRUCTION SITES

On the majority of established construction sites the principal or main contractor will usually provide suitable welfare facilities. There should be an assessment of the type and number of facilities required taking into account the work being carried out, how many people will be on the project and any special requirements (e.g. specialist cleaning facilities for employees carrying out construction work on contaminated land).

Consideration should be given to staggering break times to ease congestion at busy periods.

As an employer YOU must ensure that these facilities are available for use by your workers and that they are sufficient and are in a suitable condition. The provision of welfare facilities should be discussed when tendering for a project and you should receive details of the facilities from the principal contractor in the construction phase health and safety plan. You should also establish who is responsible for maintaining the site welfare facilities and ensure that the provision of such facilities is included within your contract documents and where necessary in the Method Statement.

**If suitable facilities are not provided it is your responsibility to provide, or make arrangements for, welfare facilities for your employees and persons working under your control.**

### 3. GENERAL WELFARE REQUIREMENTS ON FIXED CONSTRUCTION SITES

- All facilities to have adequate heating, lighting and ventilation;
- All facilities to be easily accessible taking traffic routes into consideration;
- Floors should be suitable for the purpose;
- All facilities to be kept clean, tidy and stocked with toilet paper, soap and towels (cloth or paper) or air hand driers;
- Adequate facilities for the number of people on site should be provided;
- Toilets should be lockable from the inside and partitioned from urinals. If this is not possible a separate toilet should be provided for women;
- Wherever possible, toilets should be connected to a mains drainage system;
- Washing facilities should be next to toilets;
- Mains water should be available. Where this is not possible, clean water should be supplied from a tank;
- Showers should be in a separate lockable room and available to both men and women;
- Men and women should be able to change separately;
- Secure storage areas should be provided for clothing, with drying facilities for wet clothing;
- Consideration should be given to providing separate storage facilities for contaminated clothing;
- Suitable seating and tables should be provided in rest areas;
- There should be a means of heating food and water;
- There must be a supply of drinking water – mains water should be supplied wherever possible;
- Cups or a drinking fountain should be provided;
- Provision should be made for the removal of waste via approved routes;
- It is against the law to smoke in all enclosed public places.

### 4. GENERAL WELFARE REQUIREMENTS ON TRANSIENT SITES (OVER ONE WEEK)

Many scaffolding operations are carried out where the standard of welfare facilities outlined above cannot be achieved due to the location of the project, the nature of the site or the short duration of the works. Moreover, where there is not an agreement for the client to provide welfare facilities (or all the required facilities), the scaffolding contractor will then become responsible, and as such you as an employer have an obligation to provide suitable facilities for your employees and persons under your control. The facilities you provide must consider any particular hazards on the site (e.g. the presence of rats increases the risk of Weil's disease and suitable local facilities to enable the washing of hands must be made available).

In the first instance you should attempt to provide facilities to the above standards however, this does not necessarily mean bringing in your own facilities, but it may mean making appropriate arrangements with your client to use their facilities. You should consider local arrangements during the tender process and ensure that where appropriate they are included within your tender documentation and where necessary in the Method Statement.

**Detailed below in order of priority are appropriate options to consider when it is not practical to provide the facilities listed above in 3.0 GENERAL WELFARE REQUIREMENTS, due to the location, nature or short duration of the work. Those facilities required on projects of less than one week's duration are detailed in the next section.**

## Toilet and Washing Facilities

- Liaise with clients to obtain access to toilet and washing facilities. This could be using the facilities available to the client's employees, with the client handing over the facilities on a particular floor and you as the contractor taking responsibility for cleaning and maintaining it;
- Using the client's mains water supply install a temporary toilet and washing facilities. Ensure early liaison with your client regarding a suitable location for these facilities (e.g. the car park or erection of a gantry).

## Rest, Eating, Changing Facilities and Drinking Water

- Arrange access to your client's canteen/rest facilities and a supply of drinking water;
- Arrange access to a room within your client's building and provide a kettle and microwave;
- Use the client's mains electricity supply and provide a rest hut with a power supply and provide a kettle or urn and a microwave. Ensure early liaison with your client regarding a suitable location for these facilities (e.g. the car park or erection of a gantry);
- Liaise with your client to allow access to a tap providing drinking water (but you may have to provide cups) or the provision of a tank of drinking water, which is clearly marked and regularly replenished;
- Provide a works vehicle or van etc with a power supply and sufficient seating (but please note that this arrangement can create additional hazards and risks, which need to be controlled, and therefore other options are generally preferred).

### Example:

An empty office building required scaffolding to one external elevation, the work was expected to take one week. The client arranged for the services to the building to be turned on for the duration of the work. He also arranged access to toilets and washing facilities in the building and provided a room for use as a rest room. The scaffolding contractor provided a kettle, a microwave, drinking water and cups for use

## 5. MINIMUM WELFARE REQUIREMENTS ON TRANSIENT SITES (LESS THAN ONE WEEK)

### Toilet and Washing Facilities

- The following can be difficult to arrange (especially for emergency works), but the following are recommendations to be followed where practicable:
- Where practicable, use "mobile gangs" who are scaffolders who drive lorries or who have company work vans, for very short duration works;
- Where practicable, make use of your Yard Facilities (especially by mobile gangs for the first and last calls of the day);
- Use of public toilets in the vicinity (which are usually suitable, clean, with adequate supplies of toilet paper, soap etc);
- Provision of a portable toilet including hand-washing facilities (but please note that this can be very difficult to arrange at quick notice, so the use of public toilets may be the best option);
- Identify private facilities in the locality (e.g. a café), and make arrangements (preferably in writing, but in practice this may have to be a verbal agreement given the short notice) with the proprietor/owner to use these facilities (but again please note that this can be very difficult to arrange at quick notice);
- The use of antibacterial handwipes (which are often used by visiting Contracts Supervisors and Health and Safety personnel visiting a range of small projects during the day).

## **Rest, Eating, Changing Facilities and Drinking Water**

- Where practicable, make use of your Yard Facilities (as first and last calls of the day);
- Also, if the Yard is close to the project, mobile gangs can use it as temporary welfare facilities;
- Where work is located at a distance, ensure that during the shift your workforce have access to suitable local facilities (e.g. a café), the arrangements of which should be included in the Method Statement.

*NOTE:* the NASC recommend that scaffold contractors brief their operatives not to enter domestic properties without formal prior agreement and controls, because of the risk of falsely being accused of theft etc.

## **6. REFERENCES**

The Construction (Design Management) Regulations [latest revision];  
The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992;  
The HSE Website also gives valuable advice: <<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm.htm>>.

*Whilst every effort has been made to provide reliable and accurate information, we would welcome any corrections to information provided by the Writer which may not be entirely accurate, therefore and for this reason, the NASC or indeed the Writer, cannot accept responsibility for any misinformation posted.*