

# SG37:18

## Effective Supervision

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance note should be read in conjunction with SG20 Communication & Consultation with the Workforce.

The National Access & Scaffolding Confederation (NASC) believes that effective supervision can make a major contribution to the way organisations ensure the achievement of high quality provision and consistent outcomes for customers / end users. High quality supervision is also vital in the support and motivation of employees undertaking demanding jobs and should therefore be a key component of retention strategies. Supervision should contribute to meeting performance standards and the expectations of the company, customers and end users of scaffolding services, in a changing environment.

Supervision must enable and support employees to build effective professional relationships, develop good practice, and exercise both professional judgement and discretion in decision-making. For supervision to be effective it needs to combine a performance management approach with a dynamic, empowering and enabling supervisory relationship. Supervision should improve the quality of practice, support the development of integrated working and ensure continuing professional development. Supervision should contribute to the development of the learning culture by promoting a coaching and mentoring approach by employees that develops over time the confidence and competence of managers in their supervision skills. It is therefore at the core of individual and group continuing professional development.



## 2. LEGAL ASPECTS

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Section 2(2)(c), places a duty on employers to provide “such information, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of his employees”.

Supervisors themselves have a legal duty under Section 7 of the Act to take reasonable care of themselves and others. Failure to supervise properly and effectively can lead to the prosecution of supervisors. For example, as reported by the HSE, a contracts manager employed by a scaffolding contractor was found guilty of breaching section 7 of the HSW Act following the death of an apprentice scaffolder that he was supervising.

There are additional legal requirements relating to supervision, as contained in the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015). Regulation 4 requires clients to make suitable arrangements for managing projects. While “supervision” is not specifically mentioned, supervision is an established and standard feature of the management of health and safety.

In regulation 12, CDM 2015 requires principal contractors to plan, manage and monitor the construction phase of the project and co-ordinate matters relating to health and safety. Again, this must include consideration of the role of supervision.

Despite the legal requirements to provide supervision, there is no definition in the HASAW Act or supporting regulations as to what comprises supervision. What is supervision? How is it delivered? How much is required? All of these questions are left to employers and managers to decide. Whatever definition is taken or used, supervision remains a critical consideration and plays a key role in ensuring that the management arrangements put in place by the client and the contents of the construction phase plan developed by the principal contractor are achieved and maintained.

## 3. DEFINITION

Effective supervision is an accountable process which supports, assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. The purpose is to improve the quality of their work to achieve agreed objectives and outcomes.

## 4. FUNCTIONS

There are three interrelated aspects to supervision:

1. Line management – which is about accountability for practice and quality of scaffold service. This includes managing team resources, delegation and workload management, performance appraisal, duty of care, support and other people management processes.
2. Professional supervision – with scaffold workers or groups of scaffold workers to enable and support quality practice. A key aspect of this function is reviewing and reflecting on scaffold best practice issues. This may include reviewing roles and relationships, evaluating the outcomes of the work and maximising opportunities for wider learning.
3. Continuing professional development – of scaffold workers to ensure they have the relevant knowledge, skills, understanding and attributes to do the job and progress their careers. Constructive feedback and observation of practice should be part of the learning process for scaffold workers and supervisors.



## 5. ROLE AND PURPOSE OF SUPERVISION

First and foremost, supervision needs to enable and support workers to deliver the best possible services. In this context, effective supervision will:

- Be built on respect and trust.
- Provide a regular space for employees to reflect on the content and process of their work.
- Offer employees advice and guidance concerning their work and provide support and encouragement to develop personally and professionally.
- Be a two-way process.
- Provide clarity about their role, how it relates to other roles, systems, procedures and new developments.
- Be carried out in an environment which is open and honest.
- Encourage sound, evidence-based practice.
- Be proactive about employee well-being and take appropriate action.
- Provide suitable and sufficient information during the setting to work process.
- Help in problem solving.
- Have a proactive approach to any equality and diversity issues.
- Be an essential performance management tool, ensuring targets are met and standards developed.
- Help achieve best practice and provide a quality service.

## 6. EFFECTIVE SUPERVISOR CORE SKILLS

Effective supervisors are necessary in all settings where scaffold employees need guidance and supervision to complete tasks, serve customers and meet deadlines. A skilled supervisor is an effective communicator, problem solver and employee motivator. Drawing out the potential of workers requires insight into their strengths and developmental needs. The NASC strategies for becoming an effective supervisor include:

1. Communicate effectively and respectfully (listen carefully and speak clearly and concisely).
2. Schedule regular meetings with employees (establish two-way communication).
3. Give credit where credit is due (provide praise and encouragement).
4. Help strengthen weaknesses (avoid drawing attention to weaknesses unnecessarily).
5. Be a problem solver (discuss issues and develop workable solutions).
6. Be resilient (when things go wrong, avoid investing in blame and focus on moving forward with a renewed commitment, clearer focus, and the benefit of “lessons learned” from the mishap, mistake or issue).
7. Establish systems and documentation to streamline processes (create systems safely to save employees time on a task and/or to eliminate errors).

The NASC considers the following to be the 10 key skills of a supervisor:

1. Communicates effectively – Shares information and encourages candid and open dialogue. Ensures that people share information and have access to information they need to perform their tasks effectively.
2. Demonstrates technical expertise – Understands the production systems necessary to operate the business successfully. Performs job tasks successfully.
3. Responsible and completes work without close supervision – Ability to work independently, solve problems and move ahead without constant instructions.
4. Leadership ability – Confident, knows himself well, people gravitate to him, and commands respect and trust among peers and others.
5. Organised – Organises time and priorities to achieve business results in a timely manner.
6. Adapts to and implements change – Accepts that change is inevitable and embraces change with innovation, courage, and resiliency.
7. Promotes key values – Consistently demonstrates work ethics and values. Conducts duties of the position with truth, sincerity, and fairness.
8. Team and people building skills – Understands the importance of mentoring and coaching employees. Shows enthusiasm for helping others improve or develop new skills.
9. Uses sound judgment – Applies knowledge of the business and tasks and uses common sense and analysis to make the best decision.
10. Monitors performance on site to reflect the delivery of safety and quality practices. (A Pro Forma for this role is provided in Section 9 Appendix).

## 7. OTHER INFORMATION FOR CONSIDERATION

### Who, how and how much?

The level and nature of supervision required should be determined as an outcome of the client's management arrangements for the project and from the risk assessments carried out by contractors and others. It is not sufficient to stipulate that "supervision will be provided" without specifying the detail of that provision. The client's arrangements for managing the project and the risk assessments for the project should stipulate the level and nature of the supervision required.

Questions such as who will supervise, how supervision will take place, how much is required and when need to be considered. Some workers and some activities will require more supervision than others. For example, young inexperienced workers may need very close and maybe constant supervision. Migrant workers with poor English language skills or understanding of site safety standards, may need additional supervision. High-risk activities will need to be closely monitored by supervisors.

### Senior management commitment

Senior management must visibly support supervisors in their role. They must also show positive commitment to site supervision through, for example, sufficient financial investment in supervision.

Supervisors need to be properly selected and, like all personnel on construction sites, they need to be competent. This will involve some level of training, for example CISRS supervisors. The training needs to cover both the technical nature of supervision and other skills such as leadership, communication and team working.

## Checklist for the provision of supervision

Key principles for effective supervision are as follows.

- The supervisory arrangements in place must be assessed and appraised to ensure that all key supervisory functions are clearly defined and appropriately allocated.
- The right people for the job must be selected and provided with training where appropriate. Relevant individuals must have the necessary skills and aptitude for supervisory activities, such as planning, communication, delegation and leadership etc; a thorough understanding of local hazards and control measures; and the experience and credibility to gain respect from others.
- Supervisors must be supported in their roles and responsibilities. Achievable targets should be set and visible support given.
- Supervisors must be allowed the time and the opportunity to interact with others to fulfill all of their supervisory responsibilities.
- The performance of supervisors must be measured, audited and reviewed. Supervisors must be supervised.



## APPENDIX 1 – EXAMPLE OF CONTRACTS SUPERVISOR (SCAFFOLDING) JOB DESCRIPTION

*Job role / type:* Contracts Supervisor (Scaffolding)

*Responsible for:* Site personnel, including Scaffolders and Labourers

*Job purpose:* To contribute to the overall efficiency of the business, by planning works, ensuring the cost effective use of labour and other resources on all allocated jobs.

### **Main responsibilities (for sites and labour under the control of the job holder):**

#### **Pre-start**

Ensure full compliance with contract pre-start procedures:

- Review the contract with the appropriate Estimator in order to gain a thorough understanding of the job (e.g. security passes, permits, access issues, labour budget);
- Attend pre-start meetings;
- Visit site prior to start;
- Ensure that the design matches the description in the quote and that the drawing is converted to “Working” status
- Ensure that all site documentation is complete and all pre-start approvals are in place;
- Liaise and co-ordinate with the designer (where applicable)
- Ensure that all suitable TG20 compliance sheets are available and relevant to the work. (Where applicable)
- Ensure that a specific risk assessment and method statement are in place, agreed and ready for use;
- Provide the Yard with an accurate load list(s) in good time to allow time to prepare the load(s);
- Provide Yard with additional information (e.g. access, parking, any width / height restrictions, PPE requirements / HIAB needed / proposed method of unloading / site contact details);
- Plan additional deliveries in good time.

#### **During the Contract**

- Ensure that the site personnel have sufficient (but not excessive) materials to enable the job to be delivered on time and within budget, while keeping deliveries to a minimum;
- Constantly monitor the costs of the job against the budget, including labour, design costs, transport, subcontract labour, accommodation, hire plant and sundry site expenses;
- Ensure that all scaffolds are erected and dismantled in full compliance with TG20 and SG4;
- Ensure that all ties are tested, and labelled accordingly;
- Control costs associated with the hire of small / large plant.
- Constantly review work to ensure that any variations to the original order are captured with an appropriate, signed variation order. (Such variations may include any of the following: changes in the scope of work, programme delays or accelerations, non-productive time, security clearance requirements.)
- Ensure that any verbal agreements made with the client are confirmed in writing within 7 days.

## **After Completion**

- Ensure that each complete scaffold is issued with the necessary safety label.
- Ensure that handovers are completed correctly, in full, and within 24 hours of completion.
- Check that all sites have been fully cleared, within 7 days of the company leaving site.

## **Labour**

- Plan, allocate and manage labour resources to ensure the most cost efficient use of the same;
- Ensure that each site is visited by a member of the management team on a daily basis;
- Monitor the attendance, start time and working hours of site personnel to ensure that operatives work their contracted hours;
- Monitor specific outputs of site personnel against targets;
- Ensure that hours worked by site personnel are not excessive, so that operatives are fit for work and are able to do so safely;
- Ensure that site personnel complete the necessary paperwork and submit on a timely basis, e.g. daily allocation sheets.
- Constantly review and monitor the performance of personnel, providing operatives with regular feedback on their performance and dealing quickly and appropriately with poor performers and incidents of misconduct.

## **Health and Safety**

- Actively promote safe working practices and ensure that personnel comply with company health and safety regulations, and the specific health and safety requirements of the client. This will include:
- Before new personnel are permitted to start work, ensure that they are appropriately inducted into company procedures and requirements, and that certificates are checked and verified;
- Ensure that personnel are appropriately inducted onto each new site, and sign onto the risk assessment and method statement;
- Ensure that appropriate Personal Protective Equipment is worn at all times by all individuals working for the company;
- Ensure arrangements for weekly inspection of the scaffold, and monitoring thereafter;
- Complete and record regular toolbox talks.
- Regularly review Risk Assessment Method Statement for each job to ensure that they are still fit for purpose, amending as appropriate.

## **General administration**

- Maintain an accurate job control diary for all works.
- Maintain accurate records of any issues affecting work, e.g. changes to the programme.
- Check daily allocation sheets and prepare information for payroll and as otherwise requested (e.g. to take account of bank holidays and Christmas closure).
- Conduct three monthly harness inspections, and maintain inspection records
- Conduct monitoring of site and produce a report in a timely manner.
- Complete stock planning with details of predicted materials requirements and returns in a timely manner.

**Job files**

- Ensure that a complete job file exists for each job to include: enquiry and client details; quotation; order and acknowledgement; RAMS & rescue plans; allocation sheets; inspections; handover certificates and scaffold tags; variations, invoicing and applications for payment; correspondence & miscellaneous; photos, maps & drawings.
- Ensure that any email/other written correspondence with the client is copied to the Surveyor with a copy placed in the job file.
- Ensure that any verbal agreements made with clients are confirmed in writing within 7 days, and a copy of the same placed on the job file.

**Client liaison**

- Maintain regular and pro-active contact with the client, respond to any operational issues promptly and efficiently.
- Represent the company in a professional manner at all times, actively promoting the services of the organisation to both existing and potential clients.

**Transport**

- Conduct regular ad hoc inspections of company transport and issue instructions for repair, maintenance and cleaning as deemed necessary.

**General**

- Take ownership of problems, and retain until resolved.
- Set a good example to all colleagues and customers at all times.
- Adhere to all company policies and procedures, in particular health, safety and environment, and equal opportunities policies.
- Attend training courses as relevant to the post.
- Ensure the security of all company property for which the job holder is responsible.

**APPENDIX 2 – EXAMPLE OF HEALTH AND SAFETY MONITORING REPORT**

**Task Observation/Health & Safety Monitoring Report**

<b>TASK OBSERVATION REPORT</b>		PAGE No.	(Company Name & Address)	(Company Logo)
<b>H &amp; S MONITORING REPORT</b>			(Contact details)	
<i>✓TICK BOX AS APPROPRIATE</i>				

Site Address		Date of Inspection	
Names of operatives monitored			

<b>Complete this section for all Task Observation and Health &amp; Safety Monitoring Reports being completed. enter ✓(ok) or X (remedial action required) or leave blank if N/A</b>				YES	NO	N/A
A.	Are all team members aware of the details of the project/ work is being completed?					
B.	Is the Team working safely in accordance with R.A. & where applicable method statement?					
C.	Is good housekeeping being employed?					
D.	Is the work being done to a good standard?					
E.	Is the Team working to SG4:15?					
F.	Is the Team wearing correct PPE?					

**Also complete this section for Health & Safety Monitoring Reports being completed**  
**Items assessed – enter ✓(ok) or X (remedial action required) or leave blank if N/A**

ITEM		✓ X NA	ITEM	✓ X N/A
1.	Site Attendance Register (if applicable) ?		16.	Occupational Health
2.	Records & Permits in place (if applicable) ?			Hazardous Substances?
3.	Warning notices Issued & Signs in use?			Noise?
4.	Work at height controls implemented?			Vibration?
	Falls of persons?			Welfare Facilities –adequate for site?
	Falls of Materials?		17.	Environmental Issues/Protection
	Protection of Public & Others if applicable?			Waste Disposal?
5.	Manual Handling procedures OK?			Respiratory Nuisance (Dust, Smoke, etc)?
6.	Access up & down scaffold OK?			Disease?
7.	Safe Storage of Materials OK?		18.	Asbestos Works
8.	Lifting Operations & Equipment OK?			Correct equipment on site?
9.	Moving Traffic & Plant?			DCU present/operational?
10.	Workmanship/Structural Integrity/TG20 OK?			Correct Paperwork Present?
11.	Foundations/Ground Support OK?			PPE/RPE in use/on site?
12.	Weather Conditions acceptable?			Emergency Arrangements?
13.	Lighting Levels acceptable?		19.	Other (Please Specify below) ?
14.	Electrical Hazards?			
15.	Confined Space Hazards?			

<b>Remedial Action Required &amp; Comments</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
ITEM NO.	

Print name of Auditor:	Print name of Site Foreman:	Indicate number of major breaches of either company or site health & safety rules (if applicable)  .....
Signed by Auditor:	Signed by Site Foreman:	



<b>TASK OBSERVATION/HEALTH &amp; SAFETY MONITORING REPORT</b>	PAGE No.	(Company Name & Address)	
		(Contact details)	
<b>CONTINUATION SHEET</b>			

Site Address		Date of Inspection	
Names of operatives monitored			

	<b>Remedial Action Required &amp; Comments - Continued</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
ITEM		

Print name of Auditor:	Print name of Site Foreman:	Indicate number of major breaches of either company or site health & safety rules (if applicable)  .....
Signed by Auditor:	Signed by Site Foreman:	





*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.*



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