

Use of Contractors – Common Issues?

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Key Points:

- Sean re-stated Geoff's remarks that the employer/client retains health and safety responsibilities. The client needs to know how the work will be undertaken, understand the risks to his own employees and to the contractor engaged to undertake the specialist work , and also ensure that adequate controls are in place.
- There is added complexity if the client is a CDM client and the contractor is carrying out construction work.
- The contractor should assess the risks of the contracted work and then liaise with the client to discuss the risks from each other's work - to the workforce or any others who may be affected.
- Beware of the generic risk assessment; specific work requires a fact/site specific risk assessment.
- The Principal Contractor does not have to undertake detailed supervision of contractors (L153 Managing H&S in Construction) – it is unlikely he would be qualified to do so. He needs to manage and monitor so far as is reasonably practicable.
- When selecting a contractor, it is important to establish not only that they are competent to do the job well, to time and on budget, but that they can they do it **safely**.
- Think about contractor management – what do they need to know to keep them safe whilst on your site and what is the process for informing them. They must all be able to easily access that information and you need to know that they have done so and are fully aware of the risks and precautions.
- It is vital that any changes to the scope of the work, location, equipment, personnel etc should be communicated to all interested parties. For example, if sub-contractors are brought onto site they must be properly briefed.
- Communicate with your own staff to ensure they are aware of the contractor's activities going on around them – eg work on fragile roofs, vehicle movements, power isolations.
- Ensure that controls put in place are realistic and achievable.