



## The British Constructional Steelwork Association Limited

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26 March 2020

**ALL MEMBERS MEMORANDUM NO: 60/20**

### **CONSTRUCTION WORK AND COVID 19**

Concern continues where the construction industry is currently putting the workers they employ at risk of contracting the COVID 19 virus, this appears to be mostly due to the main focus being on their fear of individual contractual arrangements being used against them instead of putting the health and safety of all those at work first.

Now is the time for those that are responsible for controlling and coordinating construction sites Clients, Principal Designers and Principal Contractors to make the right decision where it is obvious that their site operations cannot be managed (by them) to offer the requirements of social distancing for those at work, especially in the welfare facilities and messrooms, although a lot of construction activities that take place also means that social distancing cannot take place.

Further concerns have existed for some time now that the closure of hotels and restaurants, etc has resulted in the construction site workforce (which predominantly travel long distances to the sites) are now having to do these long distance journeys twice a day as there is nowhere local to the site to stay. The long hours and long-distance driving is a significant risk to those having to do this and social distancing cannot take place in the usual means of transport.

This is a good time to remind clients and tier 1 contractors of their duty under section 3, Health and Safety at Work Act: where their activities are carried out in such a way that harm could result to people other than their own employees they must, so far as reasonably practicable, adopt measures to reduce or eliminate the risk of such harm. Section 2 of the Act requires the employers to maintain the place of work under their control in a safe condition, including safe means of access and egress and provision of a working environment for employees that is safe, without risks to health and to provide adequate facilities and arrangements for employees' welfare at work.

Also below is the relevant sections from the CDM Regulations that identify the duty holders and their requirement to manage health and safety, starting with the clients and considering the risk of COVID19 against the roles and responsibilities is now paramount.

***Now is the time for the construction industry to do the right thing by the people it employs and where they cannot be offered a safe place to work then close the sites.***

**Peter Walker**  
**Director of Health, Safety & Training**

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## **CDM Duty Holders:**

### **Clients**

Organisations or individuals for whom a construction project is carried out. Make suitable arrangements for managing a project.

Clients must also make sure that:

- relevant information is prepared and provided to other duty holders
- the principal designer and principal contractor carry out their duties
- welfare facilities are provided.

### **Principal designers**

Designers appointed by the client in projects involving more than one contractor. They can be an organisation or an individual with sufficient knowledge, experience and ability to carry out the role.

Provide relevant information to the principal contractor to help them plan, manage, monitor and co-ordinate health and safety in the construction phase.

### **Principal contractors**

Contractors appointed by the client to co-ordinate the construction phase of a project where it involves more than one contractor.

Ensure that:

- workers are consulted and engaged in securing their health and safety
- welfare facilities are provided.

### **Contractors**

Plan, manage and monitor construction work under their control so that it is carried out without risks to health and safety.

### **Workers**

The people who work for or under the control of contractors on a construction site.

They must:

- be consulted about matters which affect their health, safety and welfare
- take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions
- report anything they see which is likely to endanger either their own or others' health and safety
- co-operate with their employer, fellow workers, contractors and other duty holders.