

PRESS RELEASE

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CIC Endorses CDM 2007 Regulations

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM 2007) came into force on 6 April 2007 to help improve effective planning and management of construction projects, from design concept onwards. The aim is to help drive up standards and ensure that health and safety considerations are integral within the planning of any construction related project.

2.2 million people work in Britain's construction industry, making it the country's biggest industry. It is also one of the most dangerous. In the last 25 years, over 2,800 people have died from injuries they received as a result of construction work. Many more have been injured or made ill.* The statistics tell their own story and highlight the importance of the revisions to the CDM regulations since the CDM 1994 regulations came into force in 1995.

David Cameron the Tory Leader is spearheading the opposition to the implementation of the CDM 2007, after calls from small business owners that the Regulations are an undue burden on their businesses. The opposition takes the form of an Early Day Motion calling for the new CDM 2007 Regulations to be annulled. A date has now been set for this to be debated in a House of Commons Standing Committee on Thursday, 10 May 2007 at 8.55am.

Keith Clarke from Atkins and Chairman of the Construction Industry Council's (CIC) Health and Safety Committee comments, "The CIC fully supports the implementation of CDM 2007 and believes that it will help to improve the construction industry's poor health and safety record and will be an aid rather than a hindrance to small businesses. CDM 2007 will help protect construction workers employed by small businesses. The Regulations have wide support from the Construction Industry; not only from CIC members but also bodies such as the Construction Confederation.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have consulted with the industry and the public at all stages of the revision of CDM 1994, since their Discussion Document in 2002 and the industry has advised and assisted throughout the development of CDM 2007. If the regulations are revoked this will inevitably be seen as a lack of political commitment to health and safety in the construction industry, at a time when the number of fatalities is again increasing (expected to be 77 for 2006-2007)."

HSE has emphasised in the Approved Code of Practice for CDM 2007 that they are looking for proportionality in implementing the Regulations. If the risks are low, there is no need for elaborate procedures.

Small businesses that are clients of the industry need to grapple already with planning and building regulations, which they do largely successfully. The same people who advise them on those issues (designers and contractors) have an express obligation under CDM 2007 to make sure that the client is informed of his CDM duties, so there is no question of clients not knowing what to do. There is significant evidence that appropriate attention to health and safety has a positive impact on other aspects of the construction process, such as time and cost.

HSE's concerns are with effective health and safety management, not trivial failures to comply with legislation.

Incorporating CDM 2007 management requirements into the construction process will mean reduced lifecycle costs in maintaining and operating structures (The Royal Academy of Engineering has calculated that maintenance costs are typically 5 times construction costs over the life of the structure).

There has been some concern about the loss of the role of client's agent, in CDM 2007, but clients can still appoint an agent to carry out their CDM functions if they wish to do that. The only difference under CDM 2007 is that liability stays with the client. In practice, since the CDM co-ordinator's job is to advise and assist the client, in many cases it will be more efficient for the client to appoint a CDM co-ordinator early on so that the CDM co-ordinator can make sure that the client's duties are performed.

ENDS

Notes to the editor

1. CIC is the representative forum for the professional bodies, research organisations and specialist trade associations in the construction industry. It provides a single voice for professionals in all sectors of the built environment through its collective membership of 500,000 individual professionals and 25,000 firms of construction consultants.
2. CIC is a partner in the Sector Skills Council ConstructionSkills.
3. * Statistics taken from the HSE Website www.hse.gov.uk

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