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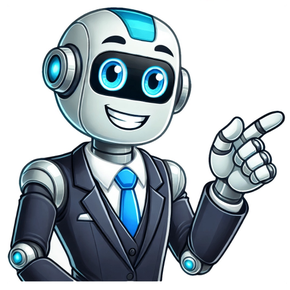

A Health and Safety File (HSF) is required on all projects involving more than one contractor (as per Appendix 4 of the CDM 2015 Guidance). If a Health and Safety File exists for a structure involved in a project with only one contractor, this file will still need to be updated. The health and safety file should contain the information needed to allow future construction work, including cleaning, maintenance, alterations refurbishment and demolition to be carried out safely. The scope, structure and format of the file should be agreed between the client and the Principal Designer at the start of the project. What is the health and safety file? The health and safety file is defined as a file appropriate to the characteristics of the project, containing relevant health and safety information to be taken into account during any subsequent project. The file is only required for projects involving more than one contractor. The file must contain information about the current project that is likely to be needed to ensure health and safety during any subsequent work such as maintenance, cleaning, refurbishment or demolition. When preparing the health and safety file, information on the following should be considered for inclusion: A brief description of the work carried out; Any hazards that have not been eliminated through the design and construction processes, and how they have been addressed (e.g. surveys or other information concerning asbestos or contaminated land); Key structural principles (e.g. bracing, sources of substantial stored energy - including pre- or post-tensioned members) and safe working loads for floors and roofs; Hazardous materials used (e.g. lead paints and special coatings); Information regarding the removal or dismantling of installed plant and equipment (e.g. any special arrangements for lifting such equipment); Health and safety information about equipment provided for cleaning or maintaining the structure; The nature, location and markings of significant services, including underground cables; gas supply equipment; fire-fighting services etc; Information and as-built drawings of the building, its plant and equipment (e.g. the means of safe access to and from service voids and fire doors). There should be enough detail to allow the likely risks to be identified and addressed by those carrying out the work and be proportionate to those risks. The file should not include things that will be of no help when planning future construction work such as pre-construction information, the construction phase plan, contractual documents, safety method statements etc. Information must be in a convenient form, clear, concise and easily understandable. What must duty holders do in regard to the health & safety file? The client The client must ensure that the principal designer prepares the health and safety file for a project. As the project progresses, the client must ensure that the principal designer regularly updates, reviews and revises the health and safety file to take account of the work and any changes that have occurred. The client should be aware that if the principal designer's appointment finishes before the end of the project, the principal designer must pass the health and safety file to the principal contractor, who then must take on the responsibility for the file. Once the project is finished, the client should expect the principal designer to pass them the health and safety file. In cases where the principal designer has left the project before it finishes, it will be for the principal contractor to pass the file to the client. The client must then retain the file and ensure it is available to anyone who may need it for as long as it is relevant - normally the lifetime of the building - to enable them to comply with health and safety requirements during any subsequent project. It can be kept electronically, on paper, on film, or any other durable form. If a client disposes of their interest in the building, they must provide the file to the individual or organisation who takes on the client duties and ensure that the new client is aware of the nature and purpose of the file. If they sell part of a building, any relevant information in the file must be passed or copied to the new owner. If the client leases out all or part of the building, arrangements should be made for the file to be made available to leaseholders. If the leaseholder acts as a client for a future construction project, the leaseholder and the original client must arrange for the file to be made available to the new principal designer. The Designer Where it is not possible to eliminate health and safety risks when preparing or modifying designs, designers must ensure appropriate information is included in the health and safety file about the reasonably practicable steps they have taken to reduce or control those risks. This will involve liaising with: The principal designer in helping them carry out their duty to prepare, update, review and revise the health and safety file. This should continue for as long as the principal designer's appointment on the project lasts; or The principal contractor where design work is carried out after the principal designer's appointment has finished and where changes need to be made to the health and safety file. In these circumstances, it will be the principal contractor's duty to make those changes, but the designer must ensure that the principal contractor has the appropriate information to update the file. This information should be provided to the principal designer and principal contractor as early as possible before the designer's work ends on the project. The Principal Designer The principal designer is responsible for preparing the health and safety file. They are accountable to the client and should liaise closely to agree the structure and content of the file as soon as practicable after appointment. In preparing the file, the principal designer should expect the client to provide any health and safety file that may exist from an earlier project. The principal designer must also cooperate with the rest of the project team and should expect their cooperation in return. Cooperation[link with cooperation] with the principal contractor is particularly important in agreeing the structure and content of the information included in the file. Liaison with designers and other contractors is also important. They may hold information that is useful for the health and safety file, which may be difficult to obtain after they have left the project. The principal designer, in cooperation with other members of the project team must also ensure that the file is appropriately updated, reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure it takes account of any changes that occur as the project progresses. The principal designer must pass the updated file to the client at the end of the project. In doing this, they should ensure the client understands the structure and content of the file and its significance for any subsequent project. If the principal designer's appointment finishes before the end of the project, they must pass the file to the principal contractor who must then take on responsibility for it. In doing this, the principal designer should ensure the principal contractor is aware of any outstanding issues that may need to be taken into account when reviewing, updating and revising the file. The Principal Contractor For the duration of the principal designer's appointment, the principal contractor plays a secondary role in ensuring the health and safety file is fit for purpose. They must provide the principal designer with any relevant information that needs to be included in the health and safety file. Where the principal designer's appointment finishes before the end of the project, the principal contractor must take on responsibility for ensuring that the file is reviewed, updated and revised for the remainder of the project. At the end of the project the principal contractor must pass the file to the client. In doing this, they should ensure the client understands the structure and content of the file and its significance for any subsequent project. The Contractor The contractor has no specific duties placed on them in relation to the health and safety file. What is Not Required in the File The file does not need to include things that will be of no help when planning construction work, for example Pre construction information that is no longer relevant, or the construction phase plan Construction phase risk assessments, method statements and COSHH assessments Details about the operation and maintenance of the completed structure, although references should be provided to O & M Manuals Construction phase accident statistics Names and addresses of contractors and designers involved in the project Contractual documents Information about structures or parts of structures that have been demolished-unless there are any implications for remaining or future structures, eg voids Information contained in other documents, but relevant cross references should be included File Format The regulations do not specify a file format as this may vary according to the project circumstances. Clients are expected to know how completed projects are to be managed from a health & safety perspective and should therefore discuss this issue with the appointed Principal Designer at the start of any project. Clients should make their needs clear regarding scope, structure, format and media required with suitable backup arrangements. The over riding concern should be to make the access of information about health & safety from the file easy to achieve by anyone with a justifiable need to receive that information. The CDM ToolKit™ has been developed for this specific purpose. In use in organisations throughout the UK since 1995 (and updated inline with the latest regulations), the software solution is available with internet access to the health & safety file. This allows any authorised personnel to access health & safety information about any published file via the internet and on demand. This allows all parties involved to monitor and collate the information required as the project progresses on line and at minimal cost to all the parties concerned. You must prepare a Health and Safety File if you're in charge of a construction project. This is one of many legal requirements placed on construction projects by the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015). The CDM 2015 places a heavy responsibility on site managers to protect their crews because construction is one of the most dangerous industries to work in. The sector regularly sees more workplace fatalities than any other in the UK. In this guide, we explore what the file is, including its purpose, what goes into it and who's responsible for making one. A Health and Safety File (HSF) must be prepared for any project that involves more than one contractor. The HSF is a collection of the relevant health and safety information workers will need in the future when carrying out works on your completed project. Think of the file as an 'operator's manual' for the building's future use. It allows crews to safely plan for any subsequent cleaning, maintenance, refurbishments or demolition of the structure. Everyone involved in the project will contribute to the HSF in some way but the CDM 2015 charges certain people with specific legal duties. The principal designer is ultimately responsible for the creation of the HSF. They must: Work with the client to agree on the HSF's structure and format as early as possible Gather relevant health and safety information from the project team Consistently review the file, making sure information is accurate and up-to-date at every stage of the project The client is the individual having the construction work carried out. They must: Ensure that the principal designer is preparing the HSF Take possession of the HSF after the project is completed Keep the HSF and make it available to anyone who needs it in the future Pass the HSF on to the new owner if the structure or site is sold The principal contractor must: Contribute to the preparation of the HSF Provide any relevant health and safety information Take on the responsibility of producing the HSF if the principal designer leaves the project before completion There are no specific legal duties put on other contractors and designers but they should still share any information that's relevant for the HSF with the principal designer. The HSF only needs to contain information that will be relevant to future work on the structure or site. This usually includes: An overview of the project and work being carried out Hazards that haven't been eliminated through the design and construction phases and how they've been addressed Background information on the building's structure, form and potential limitations, for example safe working loads for floors and roofs A record of hazardous materials used, such as lead paints or special coatings The type, location and markings of relevant services, such as underground cables, gas supply equipment and fire-fighting services General information, including as-built drawings depicting safe means of access to service areas You should only include information in the file that will be relevant to future works. This means you generally shouldn't include: Risk assessments completed during the construction phase Records of any accidents during the construction phase Contact details of the designers and contractors involved Information relating to the operation and maintenance of the structure Any unnecessary information just makes preparing the HSF more difficult. It will also potentially make it harder for crews to find the information they need in the future. As soon as possible. It's easier to make decisions related to the project and preparation of the HSF if you start collecting information early on. The HSF must also be kept for as long as it's relevant. This generally means for the lifetime of the structure or site. There's no specific format outlined by the CDM 2015 but the HSF needs to be easily accessible for the lifetime of the structure or site it relates to. This usually means that it's easier to create digital files. Whatever format the file takes, it's best practice to create a backup and have a physical copy. This will ensure the HSF is always available. For managers, site safety is a constant consideration. Attending construction health and safety courses and providing crews with health and safety at work online training helps with this. But your responsibilities start long before you step on to a construction site. Knowing exactly what's expected of you, including your contributions to the Health and Safety File, is critical to protect workers and keep your projects running smoothly. Our Construction, Design and Management course gives site managers the skills and knowledge to do this. You'll learn CDM 2015 legislation, duty holder responsibilities and the phases of a CDM 2015 project, so you can manage your next project confidently, compliantly and safely. First introduced under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 (CDM), the Health and Safety file has remained a fixture for construction companies and building firms. Like many health and safety requirements, even small businesses must have one in place. Although health and safety construction laws have been updated throughout the years, the latest CDM in 2015 ensured that firms must still maintain a Health and Safety file. It was designed to reduce the risk of harm to individuals building, using or maintaining structures. A Health and Safety file is critical during the planning stage of developments. When do you need a Health and Safety file? A Health and Safety file must be created if projects involve more than one contractor. The appointed Principal Designer is usually responsible for the creation and maintenance of the file. Although it is handed over to clients at the completion of the project. This ensures that it can be disseminated to other contractors or builders. By having access to the original file, future construction workers and designers can identify potential Health and Safety risks and mitigate them accordingly. There are instances where the Principal Designer's role may come to an end before the completion of the project. In such cases, the Principal Contractor should take over the responsibility for storing, maintaining and compiling the Health and Safety file. What should it contain? Every Health and Safety file should be pertinent to the particular project it's created for. As such, they can vary quite significantly. However, there are general guidelines which can be used when compiling yours. For example, documents which are commonly included in it include: Description of the work carried out Hazards which remain present and were not eliminated during the design process or construction (in addition to any other action which was taken to minimise these hazards) Structural principles relating to the building(s), such as bracing. Information regarding safe working loads for roofs and floors Any hazardous materials which may have been used throughout the construction process Key information concerning the movement, dismantling or removal of equipment Health and Safety details regarding the maintenance or cleaning of the structure, if such equipment has been left Locations of key areas, such as safe access from security voids and fire doors The markings, location and type of services, including gas supplies, underground cables, fire-fighting equipment etc. How extensive should it be? A Health and Safety file is designed to provide information which could be relevant to future building or construction work. There is potentially a lot of information which could be included in it. However Principal Designers are only required to include details which are relevant to the planning of future works. Furthermore, the level of detail should be proportionate to the risks posed, so it may not be necessary to provide extensive information about potentially minor risk factors. It is vital, however, that any information contained within it is clear, easy to interpret, accurate and concise. Future contractors should be able to identify potential health and safety risks upon reading the File, so it's important that information is kept in context and is easy to decipher. Principal Designers are not usually required to add information regarding contractual agreements. Neither details about the standard use of the structure or information about the construction process undertaken. Unless this is particularly pertinent to the health and safety of future works. When should it be created? Health and Safety files must be created before any type of construction begins. By devising a Health and Safety file in the pre-construction phase, Principal Designers can increase on-site safety and to mitigate risks. However, creating a Health and Safety file is not a one-off task. The Principal Designer should create it prior to construction starting. The file should be reviewed, revised and updated throughout the project. This is to reflect any changes which have occurred throughout the construction phase. If risks have not been mitigated by the design of the structure, these must be included in it. So these may need to be added during the course of construction. Furthermore, as the Principal Designers receives health and safety information from colleagues (such as the Principal Contractor) it will need to be updated to ensure all relevant information is present. Working on an existing structure If builders or contractors are carrying out works on an existing structure then they must consult the building's Health and Safety file. They need to so this before work is commenced. In addition to this, the Principal Designer (or Principal Contractor if there is no Principal Designer) must take responsibility for updating it. This is to reflect the subsequent work which has been carried out. As well as citing any existing risks which remain or any new risks which have been introduced by the subsequent works. How long should it be kept for? A Principal Designer will take responsibility for the file until the project is complete. At which point it must be passed to the owners of the building. A Health and Safety file is kept for the lifetime of the building. It provides an accurate record of health and safety issues from when the structure was first erected. Right through to the latest works which may have been carried out. Whilst some builders feel that creating one is an onerous task, there are a variety of apps and programs which can help you to collate an accurate and appropriate Health and Safety file. By collating the relevant information and creating a Health and Safety file, construction workers can increase safety within the industry and mitigate health and safety risks. Not just for themselves but for end-users and other workers in the industry. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM Regulations) are intended to ensure that health and safety issues are properly considered during a project's development so that the risk of harm to those who have to build, use and maintain structures is reduced. They were introduced in 1994 and revised in 2007 and 2015. Where projects involve more than one contractor, the CDM Regulations require the client ensures the principal designer prepares a health and safety file so that, at the end of the project, the client is in possession of information anyone carrying out subsequent work on the building will need to know to plan and carry out that work safely. The health and safety file must be appropriate to the characteristics of the project and include a level of detail proportionate to the risks. It should only include relevant information that will be of help when planning future construction work and must be in a convenient form, clear, concise and easily understandable. It does not need to include information about the construction process (which may be included in the construction phase plan), unless it may affect future works. It does not need to include contractual information, pre-construction information or information about the normal operation of the completed structure (which may be included in the building owners manual or the building log book). The principal designer prepares the health and safety file during the pre-construction phase. They must then ensure it is appropriately reviewed, updated and revised to take account of the construction works and any changes that have occurred. Where designers are not able to eliminate risks from the design, they must ensure appropriate information is included in the health and safety file. The principal contractor must also provide the principal designer with information for inclusion in the health and safety file. If the principal designer's appointment finishes before the end of the project, the client must ensure that the principal designer passes the health and safety file to the principal contractor. The principal contractor must then ensure that the health and safety file is appropriately reviewed, updated and revised to take account of the construction works and any changes that have occurred. At the end of the project, the principal designer, or where there is no principal designer, the principal contractor, must pass the health and safety file to the client. Managing health and safety in construction, Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, Guidance on Regulations suggests that the health and safety file might contain: The health and safety file must be kept up to date and available for inspection. If work is done to premises where a health and safety file already exists, the health and safety file should be updated if necessary and any gaps filled. The health and safety file is normally kept for the lifetime of the building, meaning that it should be passed on to the new owners if the building is sold, and the new owners should be informed of its purpose and importance. There are no restrictions to the format that it has to be kept in, but it would be wise to ensure it is backed up. If premises are leased, then the health and safety file to must be made available to the leaseholder. If there are multiple leaseholders, then those parts of the health and safety file relevant to the part of the building leased by each leaseholder must be made available to them. In multi-occupancy situations; for example, where a housing association owns a block of flats, the owner should keep and maintain the file, but ensure that individual flat occupiers are supplied with health and safety information concerning their home. A Health and Safety File is a repository of health and safety information that serves as a legal record, benefiting both clients and end users – from initial construction through use, cleaning, maintenance, alterations and refurbishment, and demolition. Why is a health and safety file required? A health and safety file is required as part of the Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 2015. The CDM regulations are in place to ensure risks and hazards information are collected, that the project has a response in place to manage them correctly, and that the response has been communicated to everyone who needs to know. A project's health and safety file is part of the overall health and safety management system required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. It covers all relevant aspects of health and safety, ensuring that the welfare of people are at the core of the project and resulting asset. In the UK, we are regulated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), who provides information, instruction and guidance. However, while HSE is vital to ensuring that we are meeting health and safety requirements, it is ultimately up to us to ensure that our projects and buildings comply. Having a robust health and safety file is part of that effort. Who is responsible for the health and safety file, and what are their roles? At the highest level, CDM Regulations place responsibility for producing a health and safety file with the principal designer. If the principal designer's tenure finishes before the end of the project, the responsibility passes to the principal contractor. Once the project is complete, the file is passed to the client. However, health and safety should always be treated as a wider team effort, with everyone feeding into it where appropriate. Health and safety should never be considered 'someone else's responsibility'. Client The client must ensure that the principal designer produces that file and, as a project progresses, ensure that the file is regularly updated, reviewed and revised. Once the project is complete, the client must ensure it remains readily available to all who need it. If the client sells the building, then the file goes to the new owner. In lease situations, the leaseholders must have access to the file and, if a leaseholder becomes the client on a future construction project, then the file must be made available to the newly-commissioned project's principal designer. The principal designer The principal designer carries primary responsibility for preparing the health and safety file and is the one who is ultimately accountable to the client. As soon as possible, the principal designer should agree with the client on the file's structure and format. From that point, the principal designer acts as coordinator, soliciting contributions to the file from the wider project team; in particular, the principal contractor. The principal designer is also responsible for reviewing and revising the information, ensuring that it is up-to-date at every stage of the project. The principal contractor The principal contractor provides the principal designer with information that should be included in the file. If the principal designer's role finishes before the project ends, the principal contractor will take on their responsibility for the file, including passing it on to the client. Designers and contractors Designers should always seek to eliminate health and safety risks through design and, where this is not possible, control or reduce them. To this end, the designer is required to closely liaise with the principal designer (and/or the principal contractor), helping them produce the health and safety file. The same applies to contractors. While they do not hold any specific responsibility in regards to producing the file, they are in a position to feed into the process and provide knowledge and insight that will ultimately become a valued part of the file. When should the Health and Safety File be produced? Considering the importance of health and safety, the file should be produced as soon as possible; the earlier the information is compiled and shared, the better the decisions made and the fewer risks of duplication or the need for rework. Drawings and other documents are a crucial source of data, providing information on proposed construction methods, product choices and even the thought processes around how an asset will be used. This is also where you learn about hazards – lead, contaminated land, asbestos and any services or nearby activities that could affect the work. On a BIM project, the Employers Information Requirements (EIR) forms part of the appointment and tender document and should clearly outline client requirements – what's required, when, and in how much detail. A section of the EIR focuses on the management of health and safety/ CDM, and it is here that a client can set out any requirements for BIM-supported health and safety management that it wishes bidders to address. Preferences as to the format of the file can also be set out in the EIR. When working with a digital information model, considering health and safety requirements the from the beginning is time well spent. Appropriately tagged information can be input once and then used throughout a project. If designed correctly, the health and safety file can be an output of the model, generated by a user requesting a particular 'view' of the information contained within. What should be included? CDM Regulation 12 (5) states that the file should be 'appropriate to the characteristics of the project'. In other words, it should contain a sufficient depth and breadth of health and safety information to allow maintenance, cleaning, alterations, refurbishment or demolition to be carried out safely. Typically the file will contain: Information on the work being carried out. Hazards that have not been eliminated through the design and construction phases and how they have been addressed. Background information on the asset's structure and form and any limitations – e.g., safe working loads for floors and roofs, the location of utility services, etc. Any hazardous materials used (e.g., paints, special coatings, etc.) that will prove useful when maintaining or removing these substances or working in affected areas. Information, including as-built drawings, including safe means of access to service areas. What should not be included? All information contained within the file should be of use when planning future construction work. Extraneous information – like that relating to pre-construction or operation and maintenance – is not required and will serve only to create an additional maintenance burden. Do I still need an operation and maintenance (O&M) manual? Traditionally, the health and safety file and operation and maintenance manual have been distinct and often produced by different people. However, doing it this way loses the potential for collaboration and appropriate cross linking. By creating a digital information model it is possible to beneficially combine, link and integrate both. What format should the health and safety file take? The CDM Regulations don't dictate a particular file format; however, the client is expected to provide easy access to the file and esure it can be easily retrieved by whoever needs it for as long as the building exists. So, there are a number of ways a file could be produced in a reasonably durable format – on paper, film or electronically. Regardless of format, it is important that any reference to a plan, rule, document, report or copy should include reference to a 'physical' or an electronic copy somewhere. The purpose being that you can retrieve or reproduce information when required and have mitigated against the effects of loss or unauthorised interference. Should I consider a digital health and safety file? Historically, a health and safety file was produced and stored as a series of paper-based lever-arch files. This format didn't lend itself to easy interrogation or sharing and proved difficult to manage –becoming lost or damaged. These days, we tend to create the file digitally; however, we still print it out for sharing and access. The problem doing it this way is that, once printed, the information immediately dates, making it easy to fall out of step with the electronic copy. This not only creates an additional maintenance burden for both paper and electronic versions, but creates a risk that users are relying on an out-of-date version. A digital-only version that is stored and shared in a Common Data Environment (CDE) can serve as a single source of truth or, at least, be more clearly version controlled. No matter how hard you try and avoid it, there's a good chance that at least some of the information provided for inclusion in the health and safety file is printed. Early engagement with the supply chain helps manage expectations; however, in those times when paper cannot be avoided, the information should be scanned and stored alongside the project's digital information. It's also worth considering whether information scans that effectively create images regardless of content (text being unsearchable and editable) are appropriate or whether to use optical character recognition (OCR) software to translate paper documents into machine-readable data – ensuring that documents are searchable and editable, thus making retrieval much easier. This article is based on one of the same name (2017) by former NBS Editor Richard McPartland and revised by Technical Content Specialist Jess Sharman. Additional reading and postscrips The article Health and Safety and the RIBA Plan of Work provides more information addressing health and safety through specifying and how its addressed in the RIBA Plan of Work 2020. The article is part of a wider NBS webinar series addressing the various elements of the new POW 2020, including fire safety, sustainability, conservation and intelligent design. To view the webinar series, please visit the RIBA Plan of Work 2020 hub page. Intelligent construction specification in the cloud NBS Chorus is a flexible cloud-based specification platform that allows you to access your specifications across locations and organisations. It is suited to both performance and prescriptive specifying and has editable clauses that are supported by technical guidance. Our content is continuously reviewed to improve clarity and usefulness, informed by research, user feedback and industry drivers. NBS Source NBS has created a new manufacturer product platform we call NBS Source. Bringing together NBS BIM Library, NBS Plus and the RIBA Product Selector, NBS Source provides a single source for product information that seamlessly integrates into a project's workflow and provides an additional level of enhanced product data in a consistent, structured format. The Construction Information Service CIS is a comprehensive online collection of industry-relevant publications from around 500 publishers. NBS users with a CIS subscription can take advantage of embedded links across specifications platforms to access research and reference documents. The content is fully searchable, intelligently classified and continuously updated. The health and safety file is an important document required by the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations. It contains all relevant health and safety information needed to allow future construction work, and future use of the building (including cleaning and maintenance) to be carried out safely.This CDM document is required on any project involving more than one contractor. The CDM health and safety file is the final CDM document you will need on your construction project. It's a CDM document that needs to be completed at the end of your construction project.But who prepares it, and what should it include?When is a health and safety file required? The health and safety file is needed on nearly all construction projects. Any project with more than one contractor (including domestic and residential projects) requires a health and safety file to be prepared during the project and handed over to the client on completion.The health and safety file is created during the project, with information gathered throughout the project. It is usually produced alongside the O&M manual.The purpose of the health and safety file is to provide the information needed to allow the future use of the building (and future construction work) to be carried out safely. It needs to include information from the project that will help when planning subsequent work like future maintenance, cleaning, refurbishment, or demolition. Who prepares the health and safety file? The CDM health and safety file is prepared by the principal designer (with input from the principal contractor and the rest of the project team).While the principal designer has the ultimate responsibility for creating the health and safety file for the client, other CDM duty holders also have responsibilities for providing project information for the file. Failing to do so is a breach of the CDM regulations.Information for the health and safety file is gathered from all CDM duty holders including the client, designers, the principal contractor and other contractors working on the project. So all CDM duty holders must know what should (and what shouldn't) be included in the file.During the project, information should be given to the principal designer for the file.Although the health and safety file is handed over on project completion, most of the information needed for the health and safety file is created during the project - so don't leave creating the health and safety file until the end of construction! The principal designer should agree to the structure and content of the health and safety file with the client at the start of the project so that everyone can be made aware of the information required, and it can be gathered throughout the project. On project completion, the health and safety file will be passed to the client to keep and make available to anyone who needs it, so that health and safety requirements can be complied with on future projects. It should usually be retained for the lifetime of the building. What should be in a health and safety file? The CDM regulations require certain health and safety information to be included in the file, to alert future users and those carrying out work on the structure to the health and safety risks present. Every construction project is different, and as with other CDM documents, the health and safety file should be proportionate to the project. Larger more complex or higher-risk projects are likely to need more information included within the health and safety file, for handover to the client.Use the CDM health and safety file template to create a report for your construction project.Health and safety file contents The exact information the CDM health and safety file needs to contain will depend on the size and complexity of the project, but generally, the information that it should contain includes:Project Description What was the purpose of the project? What was built, installed or demolished? A quick description of the project at the start of the health and safety file will help people in the future know what the health and safety file covers, and if it is relevant to them.This section should include: Description of the works Location of the site Project team directory Subcontractor register Supplier register Key dates (e.g. start date, completion date) Residual Hazards Are there any residual hazards (hazards that remain on the site) that may affect people in the future use, maintenance, cleaning or demolition of the work? For example, did you leave in place any hazardous materials? Was asbestos left undisturbed? Did the ground investigation highlight any issues? Ground conditions Asbestos Fragile materials Contamination Other residual risks Has the project changed an existing structure, or created a new structure? The client and future building users and maintainers need to know about any adjustments and limitations of the structure. Safe working loads Structural design Structural alterations Hazardous Materials It's not just old hazards that may remain on the site that future users need to be aware of. What about the materials you have installed? Future building users might not know from looking at a material that it is hazardous, but you know all about the materials you have used, and passing the information on could prevent ill health in the future. Do you need to provide health and safety information for: Paints Coatings Hazardous substances Flammable substances Safe Operation & Maintenance The CDM health and safety file isn't the same as the operation and maintenance manual (O&M). But you should include health and safety-specific operation and maintenance information here too. Safe Methods Safe Access Temporary Access Safe Cleaning Safe Removal What comes up must come down. And just as you have managed health and safety when building, the same must be done when removing and dismantling the structure and the things inside it. Installed equipment will be replaced and removed, and eventually, the building might be too. Decommissioning Dismantling Instructions Lifting Arrangements Location of Services Services are a health and safety concern on any project because they are often hidden. In walls. Under floors. In the ground. You can help reduce the risks to future building and site owners by providing this information for your project, as you know where things have been installed. Where cables have been run. Where access points are. Where shut-off valves are located. Cables Ducts Gas Electrical Water Underground Services As Built The final plans for the project show what has been built, where plant and equipment have been installed, and where access to voids, shafts and other serviceable parts of the building are. As Built Drawings As Installed Drawings You can keep a record of the information received with our CDM health and safety file checklist.What shouldn't be in a health and safety file Your health and safety file should not be 'padded out' with irrelevant information. Information that has no impact on the future safe use of the structure or future construction works. For example, your health and safety file is not required to contain: The pre-construction information - although relevant information from the PCI regarding residual risks (for example the asbestos survey if the asbestos is still in place) should be included The construction phase plan, risk assessments, method statements or COSHH assessments from the completed project Details regarding the normal operation of the existing structure that have no impact on health and safety Construction phase accident statistics - these should be recorded by the principal contractor but have no place in the health and safety file It is common practice to contain information on the client, principal designer and principal contractor - but it is optional to contain details on all the designers, contractors and suppliers used throughout the project Contractual documents should not be contained in the health and safety file Information about structures that have been demolished or hazardous materials that have been removed as part of the works should not be included unless there are implications for future works The information contained in other documents does not need to be replicated in the health and safety file, instead, it should be cross-referenced where relevant Some items that are not required to be included in the health and safety file by the CDM regulations may be useful to the client, for example, maintenance manuals and operation information not related to health and safety. In this case, it is good practice to include an operation and maintenance (O&M) manual, but within a separate section so that health and safety information is still easy to find and navigate, and is not lost within the file amongst all the other information.The more organised and relevant the health and safety file is, the better it will be and more useful for helping future work be carried out safely. Still unsure or need help with CDM on your project? Use our free CDM duty holder guides. Just want help with your health and safety file? Get started with our CDM health and safety file template. What Is A CDM Health & Safety File? The Health and Safety File is a requirement of The Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015, and is a record of information for the Client, or End User, regarding a site or structure, which focuses on health and safety. The information it contains will alert those who are responsible for the structure of the key health and safety risks that will need to be dealt with during subsequent maintenance, repair, cleaning, demolition, and construction work. It can also provide information for future projects/works and is useful to: i) Clients who have a duty to provide information about their premises; ii) Designers during the development of future designs; iii) Those preparing pre-construction information for future work; and iv) Principal Contractor/Contractors preparing to carry out or manage this work. The CDM Health & Safety File can provide significant benefits to the Client by minimising the cost of future work. It is a key part of the pre-construction information that the Client is required to provide for future projects under the CDM Regulations. The File should therefore be kept up to date following any relevant work, surveys etc. When Is A Health & Safety File Required? The CDM Health and Safety File is only required for projects involving more than one Contractor. It must contain relevant information about the project which should be taken into account when any construction work is carried out on the building, after the current project has finished. Information included should only be that which is needed to plan and carry out future work safely and without risks to health. Who Develops/Prepares The Health & Safety File? The Principal Designer must prepare the File, and review, update and revise it as the project progresses. If the Principal Designer's appointment continues to the end of the project, they must also pass the completed File to the Client to keep. If the Principal Designer's appointment finishes before the end of the project, the File must be passed to the Principal Contractor. The Principal Contractor must then take responsibility for reviewing, updating and revising it and then passing it on to the Client. What Are The Responsibilities In Relation To The Health & Safety File? All Duty Holders under the CDM Regulations 2015 have specific duties in relation to the Health and Safety File. These are summarised below: Clients – The Client must supply any relevant information for inclusion within the Health & Safety File. At the end of the project, on receipt of the complete Health & Safety File from the Principal Designer/Principal Contractor, the Client must make it available for inspection upon request. Designers – All Designers have to provide information relevant to future cleaning, maintenance, construction and demolition work to the Principal Designer before completion of a project; including information regarding foreseeable health and safety hazards and risks that remain. Principal Designer – The Principal Designer must prepare, review, amend or add to the Health & Safety File as the project progresses and issue the complete document to the Client at the end of the project. Principal Contractor – The Principal Contractor is responsible for ensuring that relevant health and safety information is prepared and collated from appointed Sub-Contractors for inclusion within the Health & Safety File. Should the Principal Designer's role cease before completion of the project, then the Principal Contractor takes responsibility for completing and issuing the File to the Client, or End User. Contractors – Contractors have responsibility for ensuring that information requested by the Principal Contractor is promptly issued for inclusion within the Health & Safety File. Need Help? If you need support and assistance in coordinating and compiling the Health and Safety File for your project, or simply cannot afford the time to put a File together, then please contact one of our CDM Consultants today to talk through your project. Call Marpal on 01332 668877 or email us at . Under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM) a health and safety file is a mandatory requirement for projects involving more than one contractor.The purpose of a health and safety file is to ensure that anyone involved in future construction work is fully aware of the risks and has all the health and safety information they need to help them carry out their work safely and efficiently.Here is our guide to what to include in a health and safety file, who is responsible for it and other frequently asked questions.A health and safety file is required under CDM regulations when:Projects involve (or are likely to involve) more than one contractor. The regulations define a contractor as anyone who carries out construction, alteration, maintenance or demolition work.When future construction work is likely and could affect the health and safety of workers or building occupants.A health and safety file is not required when a construction project involves only one contractor and for projects that do not involve construction. This might be purely decorative work or other activities that fall outside the definition of construction work under CDM regulations.The CDM health & safety file is designed to be a practical and accessible document, and contents must include:The file should provide a clear description of the construction work that has been completed. This includes details of the structure, materials used, and the methods employed.This section is a reference for anyone who needs to understand the original construction when undertaking future work.The CDM health and safety file must record any hazards associated with the construction work that could not be eliminated. This might include asbestos in certain materials or design features that pose a risk during maintenance.The file should explain the measures taken to manage these hazards, ensuring that future workers have the information they need to mitigate the risks effectively.Any hazardous materials used or discovered during construction must be documented in the file. This could include substances like asbestos, lead, or specific chemicals that pose health risks.The CDM health & safety file should also detail where these materials are located within the structure and any precautions that need to be taken when handling them.Detailed information on how any equipment or structures should be safely installed and dismantled is critical, especially for complex systems such as scaffolding or large machinery. This helps ensure that future contractors can perform these tasks without endangering themselves or others.The file must clearly identify the location of significant services such as underground cables and gas supplies. Knowing where these services are located is vital for preventing accidents during future construction or maintenance work.The file must clearly identify the location of significant services such as underground cables and gas supplies. Knowing where these services are located is vital for preventing accidents during future construction or maintenance work.Accurate as-built drawings are essential for future works. These drawings should reflect the completed structure, including any changes made during construction. They are a crucial reference for designers and contractors who will work on the building in the future.The health and safety file helps to protect the safety and wellbeing of those who work on or use a building long after the original construction is completed. Proper management and preparation of this file are crucial responsibilities shared by all duty holders, from the client to the contractors.The CDM regulations define specific responsibilities for duty holders to ensure the health and safety file is accurate and complete.The client, often the individual or organisation commissioning the construction work, bears the overarching responsibility for ensuring that the health and safety file is properly managed.Client duties under CDM regulations include:Receiving the completed health and safety file at the end of the project and retaining it for future reference.Appointing a principal designer early in the project who will take charge of the health and safety file.Ensuring the principal designer prepares the health and safety file during the design phase and keeps it updated throughout the project.Designers, including architects and engineers, are responsible for integrating health and safety considerations into their designs.They must:Identify and assess potential hazards related to their design elements.Provide relevant information about these hazards, including how they can be mitigated or controlled.Ensure their design does not introduce unnecessary risks during construction or later use, and clearly communicate any residual risks.The principal designer plays a central role in managing the health and safety file.Their duties include:Preparing the health and safety file at the start of the project, ensuring it includes all relevant information from the design phase.Collecting and collating information from other duty holders, including designers, contractors, and the principal contractor, to ensure the file is comprehensive.Updating the file regularly throughout the project as new information becomes available or as circumstances change.Finalising and handing over the file to the client at the project's conclusion, ensuring it is well-organised and easy to understand.The principal contractor is responsible for managing the construction phase of the project and must:Provide the principal designer with detailed information about the construction process, including any risks and hazards encountered and how they were managed.Ensure that the information is accurate and delivered in a timely manner to facilitate the ongoing maintenance of the health and safety file.Coordinate with contractors to gather relevant information about on-site hazards and the effectiveness of safety measures.Contractors, who may be involved in specific aspects of the construction work, also have responsibilities to contribute to the health and safety file by:Supplying information on the work they have undertaken, particularly focusing on any hazards they encountered or introduced.Documenting safe working procedures and any maintenance requirements for the systems or structures they have installed.Communicating clearly with the principal contractor to ensure that all relevant information is passed on and included in the health and safety file.The health and safety file should only include relevant information, so important details are not buried in a swamp of paper.The following documents do not need to be included:Risk assessments and method statements (RAMS). RAMS are usually specific to the construction phase and are unlikely to be required for future work.Details on temporary works. Unless they influence future work, details of temporary structures such as scaffolding should not be included.Day-to-day construction records. Daily logs and records kept during construction do not need to be included unless they contain specific, relevant health and safety information.The CDM regulations do not prescribe a specific format for the health and safety file, allowing for flexibility based on the project's complexity and size.However, the file must be structured in a way that is easy to navigate and understand by those who may need to use it in the future. The file can be in electronic or hard copy format, as long as it is easy to access and update.The information should be clearly presented and well-organised. An index or table of contents can greatly improve the usability of the file.The file should be stored in a safe location where it will be preserved for future reference.The health and safety file is a vital document under CDM regulations, serving as a cornerstone for managing health and safety in future construction and maintenance work.Created by our experienced and highly respected health and safety consultants.Helps you understand your responsibilities under the regulations, including how to maintain a health and safety file.IOSH approved and SCORM compliant.Managing Director (Consulting)Adam is Managing Director of Consulting at Praxis42. His professional experience includes work in the private and public sector, focussed on construction, facilities management, education, retail and housing. He regularly presents webinars and co-hosts our Risk. Sleep. Repeat podcast.