

# Guidance on Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor

Issued – January 2021

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Under The Construction Design and Management Regulations (CDM), principal contractors and contractors have an important role in managing health and safety risks during the construction phase.

Among their duties, they are required to check that anyone they appoint has the skills, knowledge, experience and, where relevant, the organisational capability to carry out their work safely and without risk to health.

To assist principal contractors and contractors in appointing scaffolding contractors, the **National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASC)** has created the NASC Guide to Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor, which is available for download.<sup>1</sup>

The Guide to Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor can be downloaded free of charge from the NASC website online shop, free publications.



The Guide to Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor – available online as a template – will be reviewed and updated regularly in line with changes of legislation and good practice (but this Guidance Note, SG39, will only need to be updated every five years).

Therefore, please always check on the NASC website for the latest Guide to Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor.

The NASC recommends that principal contractors and contractors make it mandatory to only appoint NASC member companies due to the stringent audit process required for membership.

Many principal contractors and contractors audit their supply chain – including scaffolding contractors – to ensure they have the relevant skills and knowledge prior to appointment, often by:

- Asking scaffolding contractors to complete their specific PQQ's (Pre-Qualification Questionnaires), which may be based on the Common Assessment Standard (CAS); please see the relevant section in this guidance on CAS.
- Requiring scaffolding contractors in their supply chain to be accredited by, for instance, Constructiononline, NASC SSIP or CHAS.

<sup>1</sup> The Guide to Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor has been written on the assumption that the execution of its provisions is entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people and that construction and supervision of scaffolds will be carried out by capable and experienced organisations. NASC shall be under no liability of any kind however caused whether or not due to the negligence or wilful default of the NASC or its servants or agents arising out of or in connection with this document or any part thereof.

*NOTE:* It is important to note that many of these accreditations and certifications can be gained by having only one person that is accredited to the Safety Scheme in Procurement (SSIP), so the principal contractor / contractor will still need to check the qualifications of scaffolding operatives on site.

*NOTE:* The Guide to Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor is intended for use by any undertaking (e.g. principal contractor, organisation or contractor) that has responsibility for the management, use, monitoring and provision of scaffolding.

This document is formatted in a template style that will allow such undertakings to easily adapt this format. We recognise that some undertakings may have their own preferred method for distribution of the content and as such this document is deliberately in an editable format to allow for local variations of distribution, e.g. hard copy, digital, online software etc.

The NASC has also created the Guide to Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor to improve the quality of the scaffolding structures erected on construction sites and other works of engineering maintenance in accordance with current legislation, guidance and protocol and to minimise the risk of accident or injury to operatives working on or near the scaffold and the general public.

## 2. SAFETY SCHEME IN PROCUREMENT (SSIP) AND NASC'S SSIP

The Safety Scheme in Procurement (SSIP) states on its website that it is committed to ensure reduction in health and safety assessment costs and bureaucracy in the supply chain, by making cross-recognition between member schemes as effective as possible.

NASC full contracting members can apply to become SSIP accredited at any time.

## 3. COMMON ASSESSMENT STANDARD (TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND REDUCE COSTS OF PQQ PROCESS)

Build UK and CECA, with the assistance of key assessment bodies such as of SMAS and CHAS, are delivering an action within the Construction Sector to establish a new Common Assessment Standard (CAS) which they state will improve efficiency and reduce cost in the construction pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) process.

Set subject questions will cover Identity, Financial, Corporate and Professional Standards, Health and Safety, Environmental, Quality, Equality, Corporate Social Responsibility, Information Security and GDPR, and Building Information Modelling (BIM).

There will be 240 questions covering all of the above (which may change over time).

There are two assessment standards:

- **Desktop audit** – which is the same as SSIP.
- **Site-based audit** – which will involve an auditor from the assessment body visiting the company to assess that the scaffolding contractor is implementing the policies and procedures against the site-based assessment standard.

Once the assessment has been passed, and the certificate issued, this will be recognised across the board. The advantage of this system is that clients will not be able to select a specific assessment body as they do currently with SSIP, and thus will reduce the number of accreditations and certifications that a scaffolding contractor has to arrange.

#### 4. MONITORING OF SCAFFOLDING OPERATIONS DURING ERECTION / MODIFICATION / DISMANTLE

Principal contractors and contractors engaging specialist contractors, such as scaffolding contractors, have a duty to manage them during the erection, modification and dismantle phases. This is a legal requirement, which minimises the risk of accident or injury to operatives working on or near the scaffold, and to the general public.

Principal contractor / contractor should also check that there is a good balance of CISRS Advanced Scaffolders / Scaffolders and CISRS Trainees / Labourers on site, along with effective supervision relevant to the tasks being carried out on site (please see NASC *SG37 Effective Supervision*, for more details).

CISRS is the recognised industry scheme for over 50 years and is the preferred scaffolding qualification for CSCS, NASC, HSE, Build UK and Unite as well as the largest scaffolding systems manufacturers.

The NASC stipulation is for member companies to have a minimum of 50% trained (CISRS gold and blue cards) with the remainder untrained or in training (CISRS red and green cards). The principal contractor / contractor should ask to see the cards of scaffolders on site to check they are appropriately trained and supervised.



**NOTE:** Cards can be checked by using the following website: <https://www.nocnjobcards.org/CISRS/>

#### 5. SCAFFOLD DESIGN, CALCULATIONS AND RISK ASSESSMENT / METHOD STATEMENT (RAMS)

Once the principal contractor / contractor has selected a scaffolding contractor, it is important that the scaffolding is erected to either a recognised configuration (e.g. to a TG20 compliance sheet or for system scaffold, erected to the manufacturer's user manual), or to a specific design with calculations.

The scaffold should also be erected, modified, and dismantled to a Safe System of Work (please consult NASC Guidance: *SG7 Risk Assessments & Method Statements*).

All relevant documentation should be communicated to the scaffolding operatives and kept on site.

#### 6. SCAFFOLDING INSPECTIONS AND HANDOVERS

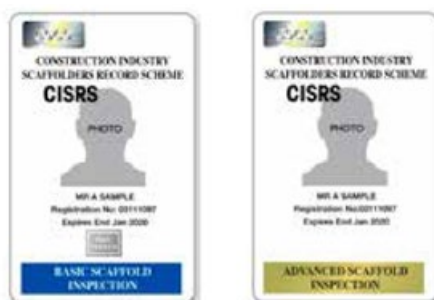
The hirer / user of the scaffold has a legal duty to ensure the scaffold is inspected when it is first erected, significantly modified and also weekly.

Once the scaffold has been completed, it should be inspected and handed over in good order, together with any required paperwork such as:

- Scaffold design drawings with calculations and / or TG20 compliance sheets, and/or system scaffolding user manual.
- Tie testing reports etc.

For further guidance please consult the Work at Height Regulations 2005, NASC guidance SG35, CISRS CAP609 electronic booklet or NASC Guide to Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor (details in the reference section).

The scaffold inspections must be undertaken by a competent person who has attended a recognised scaffold inspection training course (such as a CISRS Scaffold Inspection Course, basic or advanced). The scaffold inspections could be done by the scaffolding contractor or by another competent scaffold inspector.



**NOTE:** A CISRS Scaffolder or CISRS Advanced Scaffolder is competent to inspect structures up to the grade of the card e.g. CISRS Scaffolder can inspect basic structures and a CISRS Advanced Scaffolder can inspect all structures.

While scaffold inspections and recording in the scaffold register are mandatory, the fixing of scaffold inspection tags or electronic scaffold inspection devices is not; however, the latter are very useful in informing workers that the scaffold is safe (or unsafe) to work on, and are recommended by the NASC.

## 7. REFERENCES AND FURTHER GUIDANCE

### Legislation

The Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The Work at Height Regulations 2005

### HSE Guidance

HSE Website useful links: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/>  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/principal-contractors.htm>  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/scaffoldinginfo.htm>

### CISRS and NASC Guidance

Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS), for queries please email: [enquiries@cisrs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cisrs.org.uk) or ring 0844 815 7223

CISRS website: <http://cisrs.org.uk/> which has been the industry recognised training scheme for scaffolders for fifty years

CISRS website details full training details, example link:  
<http://cisrs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/cap609-general-information-booklet.pdf>

National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASC), for queries please email: [enquiries@nasc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nasc.org.uk) or ring (+44) 20 7822 7400

NASC Website: where the A Guide to Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor can be downloaded free of charge: <https://www.nasc.org.uk/shop/free-publications>

Please also check the NASC website for information and teaching aids such as the following:  
<https://www.nasc.org.uk/information/free-video-guidance/>

NASC Website: <https://www.nasc.org.uk/> where scaffolding guidance for Safety, Technical, Contractual, Security and Procurement Guidance is also free to download



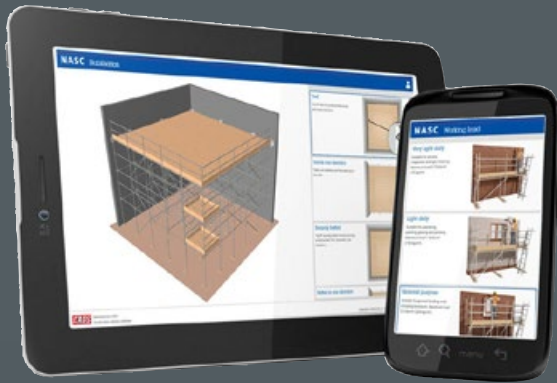
*NOTE:* NASC guidance is updated generally every five years so please consult website for latest version.

#### **Other guidance**

Build UK and the Construction Assessment Scheme (CAS):  
<https://builduk.org/priorities/increasing-productivity/pre-qualification/>

Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP): <https://SSIP.org.uk/>

# Guidance that makes a difference



- Comprehensive industry guidance, recognised by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
- Targets all safety and commercial risks, ensuring your business remains safe and profitable
- Meticulously researched and written by experienced professionals, focused on improving the scaffolding industry
- Aimed at the busy general manager with user friendly, step-by-step advice
- Cutting edge technical guidance on best practice, including ePortal and compliance sheets, that could save you thousands of pounds
- Guidance used by the whole industry – but NASC members receive much of it free and the rest at a huge discount of up to 82%.

***“Setting the Standard for Scaffolding”***

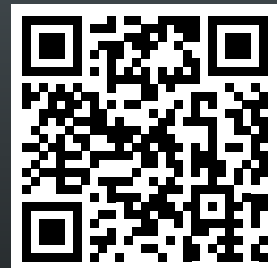


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