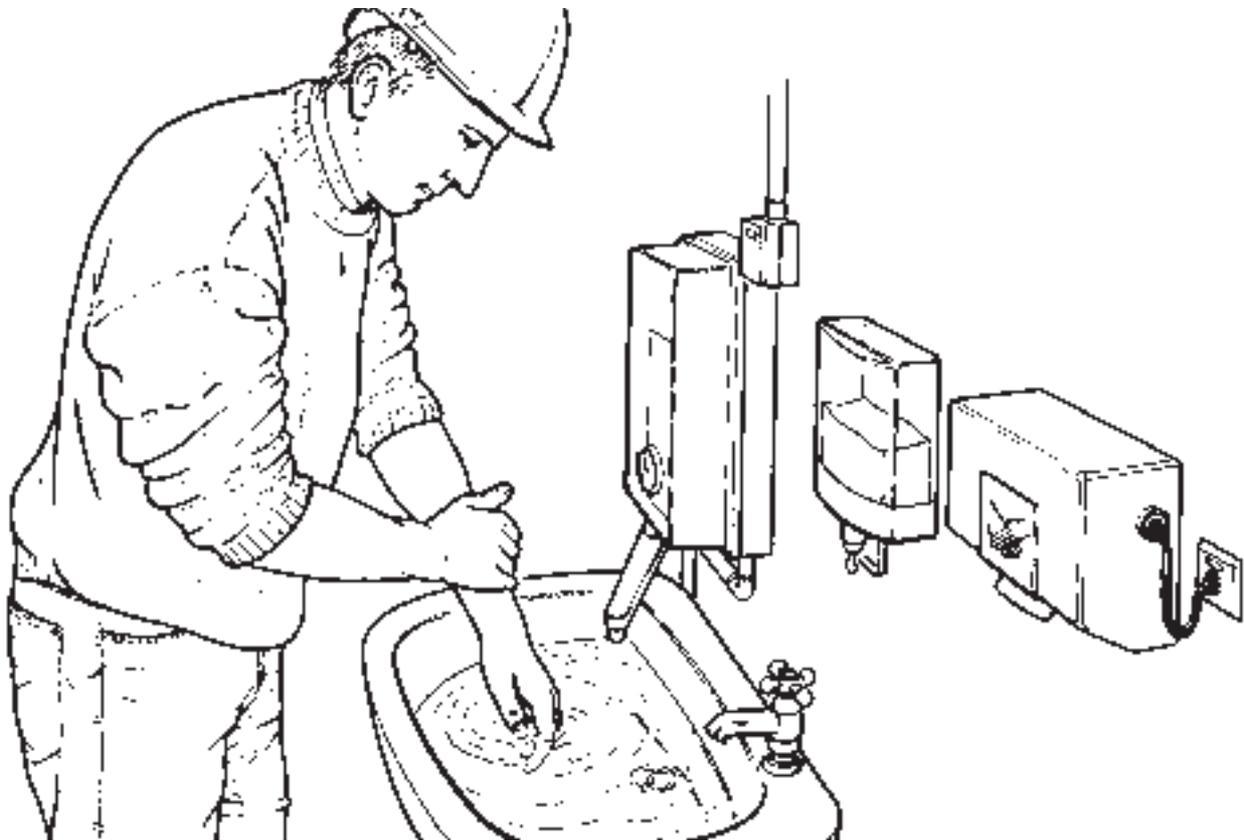




# Provision of welfare facilities at fixed construction sites

Construction Information Sheet No 18(rev1)



## Introduction

Construction site workers need adequate toilet and washing facilities, a place to warm up and eat their food and somewhere to store clothing. However, these basic requirements are often neglected. Good facilities can have a positive benefit on health and well-being and can help prevent dermatitis.

This information sheet is aimed at employers and the self-employed in construction and those in control of construction sites. It describes the minimum welfare facilities which should be provided or made available on fixed construction sites to comply with the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996.

For information on welfare facilities at transient sites, see Construction Information Sheet 46, *Provision of welfare facilities at transient construction sites*.

## Duties

If you have overall control of the site, you are responsible for making sure that legal requirements for welfare are met for the site. In practice, this means the principal contractor or other person in control of the site will often either provide or arrange for common facilities for everyone.

If you are an employer or are self-employed, you need to ensure that everyone working under your control is either provided with or has access to suitable welfare facilities. This will need to be agreed with the person who has overall control of the site.

If work is carried out in occupied premises, eg offices, factories, etc, it may be possible to make arrangements with the client to use the permanent facilities at the premises.

## Planning

- Make sure welfare arrangements are clearly addressed in the health and safety plan, where the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 (CDM) apply.
- Consider welfare facilities, their location on site and regular maintenance during the planning and preparation stage of any project, whether or not CDM applies.
- Arrange for equipment to be available, provided, sited, and connected to services before construction work (including demolition) starts or when additional numbers of workers start on site.

- Make sure the facilities reflect the site size, nature of the work, and numbers of people who will use them. If a large number of people are working on site or the work being carried out is particularly dirty or involves a health risk (eg pouring concrete), you will need more washing facilities (which may include showers), toilets, etc.

### General welfare requirements

- Ensure that all toilet, washing, changing, personal storage and rest areas are accessible and have adequate heating, lighting and ventilation.
- Facilities may need to be provided at more than one location to make sure workers have easy access.
- Make sure someone is responsible for keeping the facilities clean and tidy. How often the facilities will need cleaning will depend on the number of people on site and on how quickly they become dirty. Basic daily cleaning may not always be enough.

### Toilets

- Make sure that an adequate number of toilets are provided at all times.
- Men and women may use the same toilet, provided it is in a lockable room and partitioned from any urinals which may also have been provided. Otherwise separate toilets will be needed.
- Wherever possible connect toilets to a mains drainage system and ensure they are water flushing. If you cannot do this, use facilities with built-in supply and drainage tanks.
- Units used by female workers should have effective means for disposal of sanitary waste.
- Make sure adequate supplies of toilet paper are always available.

### Washing facilities

- Put washing facilities next to both toilets **and** changing areas and make sure they include:
  - (i) basin(s) or sink(s) large enough for people to wash their face, hands and forearms;
  - (ii) a supply of hot and cold or warm running water;
  - (iii) soap and towels (either cloth or paper) or dryers.

- If mains water is not available, use clean water supplied from a tank.

- You may need more washing facilities, including showers, where the work is particularly dirty or when workers are exposed to especially hazardous substances, eg development of contaminated land, or demolition of old industrial buildings which are contaminated with toxic substances, etc. These will need to be separate from the main facilities.

- You may need specialist facilities for certain activities, eg working with lead, asbestos, tunnelling under compressed air, etc.

- Men and women can share basins used for washing hands, face and arms.

- A shower may be used by both men and women so long as it is in a separate, lockable room which can be used by one person at a time.

### Storing and changing clothing

- Every site should have arrangements for storing:
  - (i) clothing not worn on site (eg jackets, training shoes etc);
  - (ii) protective clothing needed for site work (eg wellington boots, overalls, reflective jackets).
- Separate lockers might be needed, although on smaller sites the site office may be a suitable storage area, provided it is kept secure.
- Where there is a risk of protective site clothing contaminating everyday clothing, store items separately.
- Men and women should be able to change separately.
- Make sure that wet site clothing can be dried.
- Many fires have been caused by placing too much clothing to dry on electrical heaters, making the heater overheat. If electrical heaters are used, ensure they are properly ventilated and, if possible, fitted with a high temperature cut-out device.

### Rest facilities

- Provide facilities for taking breaks and meal breaks. The facilities should provide a shelter from the wind and rain and be heated as necessary.
- The rest facilities should have:

- (i) tables and chairs;
- (ii) a kettle or urn for boiling water;
- (iii) a means for warming up food (for example, a gas or electrical heating ring, or microwave oven).
- (iii) checking that cylinders are properly turned off when not in use. Turn off the tap at the appliance and isolate the cylinder;
- (iv) using wall or ceiling mounted carbon monoxide detectors.

- Non-smokers should be able to use the facilities without suffering discomfort from tobacco smoke. Provide ventilation, or if this is not possible, you may need to provide separate areas for smokers and non-smokers, or ban smoking in the presence of non-smokers.
- On small sites, the site office or hut can make a suitable rest area, especially if it is one of the common portable units.
- Do not store plant, equipment or materials in rest areas.

### Drinking water

- Make sure there is a supply of wholesome drinking water readily available. Where possible it should be supplied direct from the mains.
- If water is stored, protect it from possible contamination and make sure it is changed often enough to prevent it from becoming stale or contaminated.
- Clearly mark the drinking water supply to prevent it being confused with water which is not fit to drink or hazardous liquids.
- Provide cups or other drinking vessels at the water tap, unless the water is supplied in an upward jet which can be drunk easily (for example, a drinking fountain).

### Heating

- Inadequately ventilated LPG cookers and heaters can produce carbon monoxide. Gas may escape from leaking cylinders which have not been properly turned off. You can eliminate these risks by using properly maintained electrical equipment instead.
- If this is not possible, reduce the risk by:
  - (i) using and storing the cylinders in safe, well-ventilated places outside the accommodation (including overnight);
  - (ii) providing adequate combustion ventilation (provide fixed grills at high and low level);

### References and further information

*A guide to the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996* Leaflet INDG220 HSE Books 1996 (single copy free or priced packs of 10, ISBN 0 7176 1161 2)

*Provision of welfare facilities at transient construction sites* Construction Information Sheet CIS46 HSE Books 1997

*Health and safety in construction* HSG150 (Second edition) 2001 ISBN 0 7176 2106 5

*Fire safety in construction work* HSG168 HSE Books 1997 ISBN 0 7176 1332 1

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This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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