



Construction (Design and Management)

Regulations 2015: (CDM 2015) Overview of the Regulations



The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015) are the primary regulations governing the management of health, safety and welfare throughout construction projects in the UK.

CDM 2015 applies to **all construction work**, including:

- ▶ New build and demolition
- ▶ Refurbishment, extensions and conversions
- ▶ Repair and maintenance works
- ▶ Engineering and infrastructure projects

The regulations define clear responsibilities for **five duty holders** (Client, Principal Designer, Designer, Principal Contractor and Contractor), supported by HSE guidance for each role and additional guidance for workers. Together, these outline the practical steps required to plan, manage and deliver construction projects in a way that **prevents injury and ill health**.

CDM 2015: The Client's Duty

Specialist electrical and infrastructure projects, particularly those involving high risk activities such as high voltage networks, place heightened importance on effective CDM compliance.

Our experience spans a wide range of project types, from small scale private connections to major energy and infrastructure schemes. This provides insight into CDM delivery across the full spectrum - from best practice, well managed projects to those where duties and responsibilities are poorly understood or applied.

Understanding and fulfilling **client duties under CDM 2015** is critical to project success, legal compliance and workforce safety.

Supporting Clients to Discharge Their CDM Responsibilities

We work collaboratively with clients and project stakeholders to help them understand and meet their responsibilities under CDM 2015. Our approach is founded on long term partnership, supporting clients to deliver projects safely, efficiently and in full compliance with the regulations.

Effective CDM management protects not only those working on site, but also clients themselves - reducing exposure to enforcement action, delays, reputational harm and avoidable cost. Above all, it creates safer, better managed construction environments for everyone involved.

Health, safety and well-being are embedded within our organisational culture, with personal responsibility and proactive risk management expected at every level - whether in the office or on site.

CDM Regulations: Current Position

The current CDM Regulations came into force in **2015**, replacing the 2007 version. A key objective of CDM 2015 was to place **greater emphasis on early stage risk management**, particularly on clients and designers.

By influencing decisions at the earliest point in a project, CDM 2015 aims to:

- ▶ Eliminate hazards where possible
- ▶ Reduce risk through thoughtful design
- ▶ Improve planning and coordination
- ▶ Protect those who construct, use, maintain and ultimately decommission the structure

The Importance of the Start of the Project

The greatest opportunity to reduce risk lies at the **pre construction stage**. Well considered design and planning can significantly improve safety not only during construction, but throughout the entire lifecycle of the asset.

Designing out risk early reduces reliance on procedural controls later and helps create safer, more efficient outcomes for all duty holders.

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015)

Responsibilities Under CDM 2015

Despite the regulations being in force for several years, **client duties under CDM 2015 are still frequently misunderstood.**

Failure to comply can result in:

- ▶ HSE investigation and enforcement action
- ▶ Chargeable **Fees for Intervention (FFI)**, currently charged at £188 per hour (from April 2026)
- ▶ Prohibition or improvement notices leading to project delays
- ▶ Prosecution of organisations or individuals, with substantial fines and, in extreme cases, imprisonment - Since CDM 2015 came into force, there have been **over 190 prosecutions** under the regulations, with cumulative fines exceeding **£16 million**. Recent cases have seen individual fines reaching **£900,000**, reflecting the courts' increasing focus on effective planning and client oversight

The Health and Safety Executive continues to place increased focus on **client leadership and accountability**, making it essential that duties are understood and actively managed.

Who Is a Client Under CDM?

A **client** is anyone for whom construction work is carried out. This includes commercial organisations, public bodies and domestic clients.

Construction work includes:

- ▶ Construction, alteration, conversion, fitting out or commissioning
- ▶ Renovation, repair, maintenance or redecoration
- ▶ Decommissioning, demolition or dismantling
- ▶ Site preparation and clearance
- ▶ Assembly of prefabricated elements
- ▶ Installation, commissioning, maintenance or removal of fixed services, including electrical, mechanical, telecommunications and data infrastructure

Client Duties Under CDM 2015

Pre Construction Phase.

Clients must:

- ▶ **Appoint a Principal Designer in writing** where more than one contractor is involved
- ▶ Ensure the Principal Designer has the **necessary skills, knowledge and experience**
- ▶ Provide a clear **project brief** outlining scope, constraints, timescales and points of contact
- ▶ **Appoint a Principal Contractor in writing** where applicable
- ▶ Ensure the Principal Contractor has appropriate competence and organisational capability
- ▶ Ensure **pre construction information** is prepared and shared
- ▶ Allow sufficient **time and resources** for safe delivery
- ▶ **Notify the HSE** where the project is notifiable



Construction Phase

Clients must ensure:

- ▶ Effective **communication and cooperation** between duty holders
- ▶ The Principal Designer and Principal Contractor are fulfilling their respective duties
- ▶ A suitable **Construction Phase Plan** is in place before work starts and kept up to date
- ▶ Adequate **welfare facilities** are provided and maintained throughout the project
- ▶ Health and safety information is transferred appropriately if duty holders change

Post Construction Phase

Clients must:

- ▶ **Receive, retain and maintain the Health and Safety File**
- ▶ Ensure the file is kept available for future works, maintenance and asset management

Domestic Clients

CDM 2015 also applies to **domestic clients**. In recognition of their limited construction knowledge, their duties are normally transferred automatically to the contractor or Principal Contractor.

Where projects involve multiple contractors, responsibility will typically sit with the Principal Contractor or Principal Designer, depending on the appointment structure.

A Collaborative Approach to CDM Compliance

We believe that effective CDM management is best achieved through **early engagement, clear communication and strong collaboration.**

By working in partnership with our clients, we help create safer project environments, reduce risk exposure and support long term project success. Supporting clients to understand and manage their duties is not only a regulatory requirement - it is fundamental to responsible, sustainable construction.



Scan to visit our website

Powersystems UK Limited Badminton Road, Yate, Bristol BS37 5GG

T 01454 318000 E enquiries@powersystemsuk.com W powersystemsuk.co.uk