

A good framework for health and safety cooperation at construction sites

The client's obligations

As a client, there is a lot you can do to take the lead and ensure constructive and effective health and safety cooperation. For example, you can lay the right foundation to help companies prioritise health and safety cooperation on the construction site by establishing health and safety requirements in the contracts and agreements you conclude with your contractors.

One of the most important factors for good health and safety cooperation on the site is for companies to participate in your safety meetings and to get involved via their management representatives and health and safety representatives.

The rules on the client's cross-site health and safety management

The most important rules on the client's obligations:

- If, at the start of the project planning process, you expect that two or more contractors will be on site at the same time, you must appoint health and safety managers to coordinate health and safety work throughout the planning and construction process.
- Your health and safety manager for planning (P) will need to develop a plan for health and safety during the planning phase (PSS as per its Danish initials). This plan must be kept up to date all throughout the construction project.
- As the client, you must determine who is responsible for common health and safety measures in common areas.
- You must ensure that your health and safety manager for the construction process (B) holds start-up meetings and on-going safety meetings with all companies and that they conduct safety rounds in the common areas.
- You must invite the contractors to your start-up and safety meetings. If the contractor is obligated to have a health and safety organisation (AMO as per its Danish initials), then it is the employees' health and safety representative and work supervisor that must be invited to these meetings.

A health and safety organisation is a company's internal organisation for health and safety cooperation between the employer, work supervisors and other employees belonging to the company and on the construction site. It establishes a framework for the company's on-going health and safety dialogue. The companies are obliged to participate in the cross-site health and safety work coordinated by the client's health and safety manager. This means they must participate in start-up and safety meetings, for example. Companies are obliged to set up an AMO at construction sites when they have at least five employees and contracted workers who work for 14 days or more.

You can read more about the rules in the Executive Order on Duties of the Client:

- at.dk/en/duties-client

Health and safety cooperation in practice

Important considerations for clients before going out to tender or signing a contract

Cross-site health and safety management at the construction site is contingent, among other things, on the frameworks and powers that you establish in your role as the client for preventative health and safety work in the project. As the client, you can use your tenders and contracts to apply the requirements in the Work Environment Act to the health and safety work undertaken by your contractors. This will make it easier for you to comply with your own obligations and to ensure contractors contribute to coordinated health and safety work on the site.



Cooperation with contractors

As the client, there is a lot you can do to create a clear framework for proactive health and safety cooperation in common areas on the worksite and thus contribute towards the prevention of health and safety risks.

Before you sign a contract with your contractors, you should consider the following, among other things:

- How will you ensure that contractors participate in your start-up and safety meetings and how will you ensure contractors participate via their health and safety organisation?
- How will you ensure that you can comply with your obligations relating to health and safety coordination with regard to issues such as language barriers at safety meetings etc.?
- How should the contractors address any language barriers and differences in safety culture in common areas so that the companies and the health and safety manager can communicate with each other in practice?
- How should the health and safety manager for construction (B) be able to respond, if a contractor does not comply with the health and safety plan?

Remember

You should use the safety meetings in order to create clear frameworks for companies who work within shared common areas at the worksite.

Frameworks for the health and safety managers

As the client, you have an obligation to establish frameworks for the work that your health and safety managers are to carry out. Before signing a contract with a health and safety manager, you should consider the following:

- What duties are you going to delegate to the health and safety managers for planning (P) and construction respectively (B)?
- How will safety rounds be conducted?
- How should the health and safety manager for construction (B) organise their supervisory work?
- Should the health and safety manager for construction (B) have the authority to stop work locally?
- Should the health and safety manager for construction (B) have the ability to use financial sanctions or positive incentive structures such as bonus schemes, which reward a high safety culture?