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CDM COMPLIANCE ESSENTIALS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO MEETING CONSTRUCTION (DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT) REGULATION 2015 REQUIREMENTS.

OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE GROUP
SPECIALISTS IN SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK & INDUSTRIAL RISK CONTROL

CDM Compliance Essentials

A Practical Guide to Meeting CDM 2015 Requirements

Operational Assurance Group

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1. Executive Summary

This document provides practical guidance on achieving compliance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015). Developed by Operational Assurance Group, it is designed to support Clients, Designers, and Principal Contractors in understanding and fulfilling their duties in a clear, structured, and operationally effective manner.

The focus is on delivering compliance that is not only aligned with UK regulatory expectations, but also practical, proportionate, and usable within live project environments.

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2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide clear guidance on CDM 2015 requirements
- Define key duty holder responsibilities
- Support practical implementation across project lifecycles
- Promote effective risk management through design and construction
- Enable audit-ready compliance

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3. Scope

This guidance applies to:

- Construction projects of all sizes
- Clients, Designers, Principal Designers, and Principal Contractors
- Project lifecycle stages from concept through to completion

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4. Our Mission

“To protect people and businesses by delivering practical, audit-ready safe systems of work and risk control solutions that enable confident operational delivery.”

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5. Core Principles

Safety as Standard

Health and safety considerations must be embedded from concept through to completion.

Built for the Real World

Processes and documentation must be practical and applicable on site.

Compliance Without Complication

CDM compliance should be achieved without unnecessary bureaucracy.

Operational Alignment

Solutions must reflect how projects are actually delivered.

Audit-Ready by Design

All documentation must be structured, traceable, and defensible.

Clear & Direct Communication

Roles, responsibilities, and requirements must be clearly understood.

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6. Overview of CDM 2015

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 establish a framework for managing health, safety, and welfare throughout construction projects.

Key objectives include:

- Integrating health and safety into design and planning
- Ensuring cooperation and coordination between duty holders
- Reducing risks during construction, use, and maintenance

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7. Key Duty Holders and Responsibilities

7.1 Client

- Appoint competent duty holders
- Ensure adequate time and resources are allocated
- Provide pre-construction information
- Ensure arrangements are in place for managing the project

7.2 Principal Designer

- Plan, manage, and coordinate health and safety during pre-construction phase
- Identify, eliminate, or control foreseeable risks through design
- Prepare and provide pre-construction information
- Liaise with the Principal Contractor

7.3 Designers

- Eliminate, reduce, or control risks through design decisions
- Provide information on residual risks
- Cooperate with other duty holders

7.4 Principal Contractor

- Plan, manage, and monitor construction phase
- Develop the Construction Phase Plan
- Coordinate contractors
- Ensure site safety and welfare arrangements

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8. Core CDM Documentation

Key documents required for compliance include:

Pre-Construction Information (PCI)

Information required for planning and design phases

Construction Phase Plan (CPP)

Defines how health and safety will be managed during construction

Health and Safety File

Contains information for the safe use, maintenance, and future works

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9. Practical Implementation Across Project Lifecycle

A visual representation of the CDM project lifecycle is provided below to support understanding of how duties and risk management activities align across each phase.

[Project Lifecycle Diagram – see attached image]

9.1 Concept and Planning

- Early identification of risks
- Allocation of roles and responsibilities
- Development of initial project brief

9.2 Design Phase

- Risk elimination and reduction through design
- Coordination between designers
- Development of PCI

9.3 Pre-Construction

- Appointment of Principal Contractor
- Finalisation of Construction Phase Plan
- Site readiness and planning

9.4 Construction Phase

- Implementation of safe systems of work
- Ongoing risk management and supervision
- Communication and coordination

9.5 Handover and Completion

- Compilation of Health and Safety File
- Review of project performance

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10. Our Structured Approach

10.1 Discovery & Scoping

Define project scope, risks, and compliance requirements

10.2 Site Familiarisation

Understand site-specific constraints and operational realities

10.3 Assessment & Gap Analysis

Review existing arrangements against CDM requirements

10.4 Document Development

Produce clear, compliant documentation (PCI, CPP, H&S File)

10.5 Implementation Support

Support practical application across project teams

10.6 Review & Approval

Ensure compliance and operational alignment

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11. UK Regulatory Framework and HSE Alignment

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM)

Primary legislation governing construction health and safety

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA)

- Duty to ensure health, safety, and welfare

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR)

- Requires risk assessment and management arrangements

Work at Height Regulations 2005

- Controls risks associated with working at height

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)

- Controls exposure to hazardous substances

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)

- Ensures safe use of equipment

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)

- Governs lifting operations

HSE Guidance

- L153: Managing Health and Safety in Construction (CDM ACOP guidance)
- HSG65: Managing for Health and Safety
- INDG411: Need Building Work Done Safely?

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12. Common Challenges

- Late appointment of duty holders
- Poor quality or generic documentation
- Lack of coordination between designers and contractors
- Insufficient client engagement
- Documentation not reflecting actual site practices

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13. Continuous Improvement

- Lessons learned from projects
- Feedback from site teams
- Audit and inspection outcomes
- Updates to legislation and guidance

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14. What Sets Operational Assurance Group Apart

Industry-Specific Expertise

Experience across complex and high-risk sectors

Practical Delivery

Solutions designed for real-world application

Audit-Ready Outputs

Structured and compliant documentation

Scalable Support

Flexible services aligned to client needs

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15. Conclusion

Effective CDM compliance is essential for safe and successful project delivery.

By applying a structured, practical, and collaborative approach, organisations can meet regulatory requirements while enabling efficient operations.

Operational Assurance Group provides the expertise and support required to achieve this outcome.

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16. Contact

Operational Assurance Group Specialist Consultancy in Safe Systems of Work & Industrial Risk Control

For further information or support, please get in touch.

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