

Session 3: The Building Safety Act 2022: Golden Thread

Questions & Answers from the Session

1. Golden Thread & Documentation

- **Is the golden thread effectively a document database?**
 - The golden thread is an information database and management system. Documents should be included where relevant to compliance during design or building safety in occupation (a list of documents and the gateways they need to be included at are provided in the upcoming IStructE golden thread guidance)
The golden thread is mainly about including information in a way that it can be found by the right person at the right time. Simply putting all your documents in the golden thread would not be considered compliant.
- **What kind of info would be required to allow reconstruction of calcs in the golden thread?**
 - Generally speaking, if the information can be derived then it does not need to be included. (For example if you have length and width, you don't need to include area.)
This means you don't need to provide all the calculation values only the input parameters.
However, there are a few additional parameters relating to structural and fire safety that need to be included in the golden thread even if they can be calculated by an engineer.
- **Who has the right to decide what's to be superseded in the golden thread?**
 - Ultimately the Principal Accountable Person, often the client, (PAP) is the main curator for occupied HRBs.
 - During design and construction it is the Principal Designer (PD) and Principal Contractor (PC) respectively. However as the structural engineer working on the project responsibility for the structural information will likely be delegated to you.
The procedure for deciding whether to remove information from the golden thread is described in IStructE golden thread guidance.
- **How do you prevent the editing of the 'live' information within the IFC/DXF files?**
 - The PAP, PD or PC should provide controlled access to the golden thread to prevent information from being edited.
<https://buildingsafety.campaign.gov.uk/building-safety-regulator-making->

[buildings-safer/roles-and-responsibilities-for-high-rise-residential-buildings/](https://buildingsafety.campaign.gov.uk/building-safety-regulator-making-buildings-safer/roles-and-responsibilities-for-high-rise-residential-buildings/)

- **Does this include manhole issues with drainage also in the golden thread?**
 - Yes, this information should be included in the golden thread if required for Building Regulation approval.
- **Is the Golden Thread required for any of the BSR Gateway submissions?**
 - The golden thread first needs to be submitted at gateway 2, and again at gateway 3. The golden thread should be created at the beginning of a project and compliance should be demonstrated as part of the submission.
- **Who is responsible for maintaining the Golden Thread after the building has been handed over?**
 - The Principal Accountable Person, PAP, (often the client) is responsible for maintaining the golden thread.
<https://buildingsafety.campaign.gov.uk/building-safety-regulator-making-buildings-safer/roles-and-responsibilities-for-high-rise-residential-buildings/role-of-accountable-persons-for-high-rise-residential-buildings/>
- **Is the golden thread focusing only on the building or also external works like pavement?**
 - The Golden thread applies to all Building Regulation work.
 - There are certain external works that are needed to be included a full list can be found on the government's website. For example, a build-over design is required as part of the golden thread.
- **Can a legal team request the golden thread?**
 - The Golden thread can be legally seen by dutyholders, the emergency services and the BSR. Residents can see the Safety Case Report and request further information. A legal team would need to make an application.
- **Can the golden thread for HRBs be retrospectively collated?**
 - The golden thread will need to be put together for existing HRBs retrospectively.
 - For new builds the golden thread should be created from the beginning of the project.

- **Who approved the Golden Thread report?**
 - The BSR can request to see information and will review safety case reports. There is no formal approval and no Golden Thread Report.
 - Information about the act itself can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-building-safety-act>
- **How should the Golden Thread be retrospectively collated for a historic HRB?**
 - Yes, that is a key requirement of the legislation.
 - This is covered in our forthcoming guidance. “Key Building information” and a safety case report will need to be compiled based on desk study, survey, inspection and assessment
- **What format is acceptable if no digital information is available?**
 - The information will have to be digitalised to be compliant with the golden thread.
- **Is there a legal time limit within which the client/freeholder must provide golden thread information?**
 - Information about the act itself can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-building-safety-act>
- **What happens if you can't establish certain building elements?**
 - This is covered in our Safety Case guidance. Building owners must take all reasonable steps to collate information.
 - Provide the information you can that proves the safety of the element. State where information is based on testing (knowns) vs literature (estimates).
 - For any missing information that cannot be established, state the possible risks due to missing information, create a documented plan for how that information could be gathered at a future date. Ensure you state the reasons why it has not been gathered.

2. Refurbishment & Design

- **How does this work when it's a refurbishment? Do you have to redesign it all in BIM?**
 - All new information and design information related to changes to the existing building must go through the gateway system
 - For other existing building information, there are alternatives, but we'd strongly recommend using BIM, and saving the information in an ifc format.

- **For converting an office to residential without original designs, must the team redo all drawings in BIM or metadata files?**
 - A full gateway submission would be required, so yes this is likely
- **For structural modifications in a leaseholder flat within a 100+ year-old HRB with no records, who is responsible for obtaining full building information?**
 - In the context of structural modifications within a leaseholder flat in a 100+ year-old higher-risk building (HRB) lacking existing records, the responsibility for obtaining comprehensive building information is the responsibility of the building's Principal Accountable Person.
 - The leaseholder also has duties: A leaseholder planning structural alterations is required to seek approval from the PAP and the BSR through the gateway system.
 - Works cannot start until approval has been obtained
 - The designer must also inform the client that the building is a HRB
 - Advice is provided in our Gateways guidance
- **Do existing HRB asset owners need to produce a golden thread for their buildings?**
 - Yes
- **What are our responsibilities if asked to produce remedial designs or refurbishments without an existing BIM model?**
 - You will need to advise the client of their duties under the BSA and that the building is a HRB.
 - You will need to gain gateway approval prior to works commencing. It may transpire that you are the Principal Designer
 - You will need to gather and digitalise the information related to the works being undertaken.
 - The accountable person should be creating a golden thread of information for the building, if that information does not exist they may commission you to provide it.
 - It is strongly recommended to use the IFC format for the core model, however if the accountable person has opted to use another format the information should be collated as per the standards of that project.
 - Refer to TSE article August 2024.
- **Can alterations be carried out to an existing building without a safety file?**

- Under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015), a Health and Safety File is required for construction projects involving more than one contractor. If no existing file is available, a new one must be created for the current project, containing information necessary for future construction work, maintenance, or demolition to be carried out safely.
- Under the BSA and secondary legislation, alterations require gateway submission and approval.

3. Legal & Responsibility

- **What's the dutyholder's legal responsibility if a client doesn't initiate the golden thread?**
 - Under the Building Safety Act 2022, the client (PAP) holds the primary legal responsibility for initiating and maintaining the golden thread of building safety information during the design and construction phases of a project. This obligation applies to higher-risk buildings (HRBs), residential structures that are at least 18 metres tall or have seven or more storeys.
 - If the client does not fulfill their duties regarding the golden thread, other dutyholders (namely the Principal Designer and Principal Contractor) are still legally obligated to submit Golden thread information during the Gateways process.
 - While dutyholders have specific responsibilities to ensure building safety and compliance, the client bears the ultimate responsibility for initiating and maintaining the golden thread. Neglecting this duty not only jeopardizes the project's success but also exposes the client to legal and financial risks.
 - For detailed guidance on the roles and responsibilities under the Building Safety Act, you can refer to:
<https://buildingsafety.campaign.gov.uk/building-safety-regulator-making-buildings-safer/building-safety-regulator-news/understanding-the-golden-thread/>
- **What obligations are there on the dutyholder for the life of the building?**
 - The Golden Thread is not a one-time task; it requires ongoing maintenance and updates as the building ages and undergoes changes. It is the responsibility of the accountable person to ensure that these changes are made.
- **Who manages the security and long-term holding of the golden thread?**
 - The Principal Accountable Person.

- **What happens if clients/IT providers go into liquidation and data disappears?**
 - This would be a breach of compliance with the act. It is up to the accountable person (often the client) to ensure the data is stored in a robust enough way to ensure this does not happen.
- **Does the Principal Contractor need their own BIM model, or can designers manage updates during construction?**
 - The principal contractor is responsible for updating and maintaining the golden thread throughout the construction phase. The contractor may wish to outsource this to the designer. However, the only requirement of a designer would be to provide the information (and be responsible for updating information) related to their own work.

4. Access, Storage & Security

- **How is the Golden Thread data stored?**
 - This question is answered comprehensively in the upcoming IStructE golden thread guidance.
- **What are the backup and privacy/security requirements?**
 - The “how” is not specified in the legislation only the need for it to be digitally stored, secure from unauthorized access, compliant with data protection, presented in a usable format, and accessible to authorized individuals. The accountable person would be responsible for ensuring that the legislation is followed in whatever systems they are using.

5. Resources & Recordings

- **Will the CPD recording be made available to participants?**
 - *A copy of the presentation slides is not available, but the recording of the full presentation is available on the IStructE YouTube channel*
- **Any CPD certificates?**
 - *Given the number of sessions and varying attendees across this lecture series, CPD certificates will not be issued, but time spent attending should nonetheless be recorded as part of your annual CPD record*