

Review



This new guide for principal designers under CDM 2015 by and large offers pragmatic advice on how the role may be undertaken, concludes **Steve Jones**.

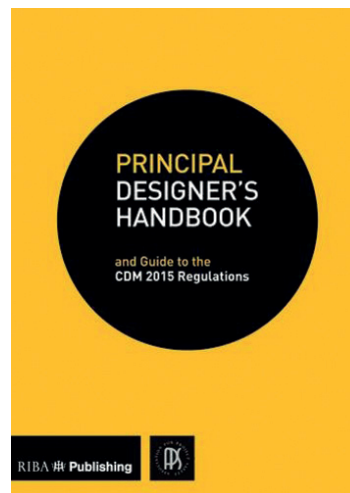
Principal Designer's Handbook and Guide to the CDM Regulations 2015

Author: Association for Project Safety

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This handbook is focused on designers

who may be undertaking the role of principal designer on small and medium-sized projects. It outlines the role and describes how it may be carried out in practice. It does not intend to be a substitute for the regulations and guidance produced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), but assumes users will already be familiar with these.

Aside from the introduction etc. it has five substantive sections:

- the role of the principal designer
- the principal designer in practice
- liaison with the principal contractor
- standard and exemplar documents
- key CDM roles

The last two sections introduce little that is new and sometimes seem more focused on espousing the virtues of the Association for Project Safety (APS) than providing useful information. The standard and exemplar documents section contained sample charts and letters, whereas the sole purpose of the precis of CDM roles appeared to be an attempt to introduce an additional role of CDM adviser.

It is in the first three sections that the true value of the handbook lies. The section describing the role of the principal designer

of necessity reiterates information provided elsewhere, but also expands upon this to illustrate real-life scenarios that are likely to be relevant to smaller practices. The differences between domestic and commercial clients, and what effects these may have on the activities of the principal designer, are described.

The section outlining the role of the principal designer in practice is the largest and, without doubt, the most useful section of the handbook. It starts with fee and appointment management and goes on to describe practical ways in which the duties of the principal designer can be addressed. It also outlines how to deal with realistic situations not covered elsewhere, such as late appointment to the role and novation.

The third section is on liaison with the principal contractor and is only a few pages long. This mostly offers good, if routine, advice on communication with the principal contractor, except for a particularly useful element on the defects liability period which outlines how to deal with works after the project has been handed over to the client.

The handbook contains a useful, if somewhat busy, flowchart for the role of the principal designer, although it is not readily clear what many of the other figures provided are attempting to illustrate. The project timeline charts would have benefited from descriptions of project stages, rather than stage numbers

which effectively limited their usefulness to those familiar with the numbering systems selected.

Although some parts of the *Principal Designer's Handbook* have little to commend them, the majority of it offers pragmatic advice and guidance on how the role of the principal designer may be undertaken; with a focus on the small-project end of the industry. It recognises that it is not a complete guide in itself and that knowledge of other guidance is necessary to effectively carry out the role of principal designer. It is likely to be of most use as a reference document for practising designers who undertake the role of principal designer from time to time.

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Steve is an HSQ&E Technical Director at ARCADIS and has undertaken the role of planning supervisor/CDM-C/ principal designer since the inception of the CDM Regulations. He was part of the working group that developed the principal designer guidance published by the CITB and is the current chairman of the IStructE Health and Safety Panel.

