



Setting up a site



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FOR SMALL JOBS, SITE ESTABLISHMENT MAY BE AS SIMPLE AS TURNING UP TO THE JOB WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS, BUT FOR MORE COMPLEX PROJECTS AND FOR JOBS LIKELY TO TAKE WEEKS OR MONTHS, SETTING UP A CONSTRUCTION SITE TAKES MORE PLANNING.

THE FIRST CONSIDERATION is protecting both the site and the public. Fences, hoardings, barriers and lockable gates may be required to keep the general public safe, to isolate specific work and to avoid problems such as fly-tipping or waste dumping.

Organised security should only be necessary when there is a concern about unauthorised access or theft from the site.

Securing the site

Specific options to isolate the site or specific areas of it include:

- perimeter fencing and lockable gates (these may need to be hired)
 - signs to warn of the dangers and asking people to stay out
 - netting or screens to prevent material falling from the building or scaffolds
 - physical barriers that restrict access to excavations and openings
 - welding operations screened from public view.
- Boarding walls are another form of barrier often used in alterations to:
- isolate the work area from other areas of the building that are still occupied
 - provide security for the occupants so that open or exposed areas are not an easy point of access for unwanted visitors
 - shield the inside from the outside while the building is opened up
 - allow some normality inside the building in areas where the build is not taking place.

Creative solutions

Lateral thinking can sometimes reduce site risks and provide good storage space at the same time.



Temporary accommodation and ablutions

What site offices, sheds, lunchrooms, toilets and washing facilities are needed will depend on the size and duration of the job. The Health and Safety in Employment Regulations 1995 require that every site has:

- suitable washing facilities
- suitable toilet facilities
- a supply of drinking water
- first aid facilities
- accommodation for clothes and meals.

Site accommodation should be easily reached by those who need to use it and be in an area that will not interfere with construction. It should not be on top of underground cables or pipes that need to be accessed.

Where there is already an established site and facilities, such as in an existing building having

work done, it may not be necessary to bring in extra accommodation. Confirm this with the clients well before work begins – they may not be happy for builders and subcontractors to use their facilities, meaning a portable toilet must be ordered. Clients will need to cover the cost of this.

For a very small team, first aid facilities and accommodation for clothes and meals could be provided in a work van.

Storage

Plant should be immobilised during non-work periods and preferably locked away overnight. Plan storage areas before work starts, considering things like:

- size and space required (and available)
- proximity to work areas and excavations
- any need for secure storage ➤

- manufacturers' guidelines or requirements for storage of products before installation
- undercover and open air options
- what can stay on site at the end of each day and what needs to be taken away
- facilities for hazardous material storage.

Materials that stay on site should be safely stacked and secured to keep them clean and dry and to ensure the safety of workers and anyone who may enter the site.

Subcontractors often need somewhere to store tools and materials as well.

Builders who don't own site sheds can hire containers and price them into the job.

Skips and areas for storing construction waste or materials should be away from the street to reduce the risk of unwanted rubbish

being thrown into the bins during evenings or weekends.

Power, water and telecomms

Construction sites need power and water to function, and telecommunications need considering where there is limited or no mobile phone coverage.

For greenfield sites, consider where power and water will eventually be needed for building.

Builders should involve subcontractors in the early stages of services establishment as they will be the ones making the connections. Coordinate services such as using the same trenches for stormwater and wastewater.

Power is the lifeblood of the site. A temporary connection needs to be sufficient for the whole site to run off.

Liaise with neighbours

Talking to the neighbours is very important. They may be home during the day and be affected by noise, dust, additional traffic, site radios, swearing or site workers having a view into their property.

The first contact should be made before the job begins, but let your clients know that you will be doing this. Neighbours should be given a point of contact so they can air any concerns.

Activities like pile driving and concrete pours can be disruptive, so inform the neighbours when these activities are programmed, giving them the opportunity to move vehicles or be out.

Importantly, only go onto a neighbour's property with their permission. ◀