



Scaffold permit guidance

Falls from height are the dominant cause of fatal and serious injuries in the construction industry.

Before you erect any structure including scaffolding **on or over** a footpath, road or verge interacting with a public highway you must apply for a permit. It is a legal requirement under the [Public Highways Ordinance, 1967](#).

Permits also allow the HSE to:

- Ensure clients and contractors are aware of their duties in respect to inspection, maintenance and protection of the structures.
- Determine any specific conditions of the erection, use and maintenance of the scaffold.

A public highway includes any road, street, lane or public place. Public place means any place to which the public or a substantial group of the public has access and includes, but is not limited to, streets, highways, and the common areas of schools, hospitals, apartment houses, office buildings, transport facilities, piers, slipways and shops.

Whilst Terres Mises a l'Amende signifies a private parking area the land is still considered a public place when the public or a substantial group of the public has access.

Any queries concerning application processing should be directed in writing to HSE@gov.gg or may be remedied by calling 220010.

Traffic Management

You will need a traffic management plan, if the structure is likely to cause an obstruction to a public highway/road, require a road closure or obstruct parking spaces. You may also need to get competent advice on whether listed building consent is required.

Where it is necessary to close a footpath, authority from Traffic and Highway Services will be required in a similar way to when a carriageway is closed. [Roadworks Information including application for temporary road traffic management](#).

If the scaffold impinges on the highway works must be safely and **clearly signed, guarded and lit** in accordance with the [Safety at Street Works and Road Works](#) Code of Practice.

Contact Traffic and Highway Services on Tel: 221000 or Email traffic@gov.gg for further information.

Information Requirements

Guernsey's Trading Standards Service enforce the Trading Standards (Fair Trading) (Guernsey) Ordinance, 2023 (FTO)

Scaffold contractors must provide specific information to clients in specific ways before they are bound by any contract. Once the contract is agreed, they must provide a copy to the clients. Business advice is available at <https://www.gov.gg/tsbusinessadvice>. Consumer advice is available at <https://gov.gg/tsconsumeradvice>

Checklists on contractual requirements are also available at [Information, cancellation, and other charges at https://gov.gg/tsinformationrequirements](#)

Call 01481 220379 or email tradingstandards@gov.gg for further information.

Scaffold Contractors

The [Health and Safety at Work \(General\) \(Guernsey\) Ordinance, 1987](#) section 1.(1)(a) places a duty on employers to provide **systems of work** that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health.

When developing a safe system of work, you should follow these 5 steps:

1. Conduct a risk assessment.
2. Carry out research and consult employees on the best way to do the work.
3. Document the safe system of work.
4. Communicate the safe system of work to employees.
5. Review and monitor the effectiveness of the safe system of work.

Once developed ensure employees have been **instructed, trained and supervised** to confirm they are following **the safe system of work**, which should be created using principles contained in [SG4:22 \(Preventing Falls in Scaffolding Operations\)](#) and contain the information such as that referenced in [NASC SG7-19-Risk-Assessments-Method-Statements-RAMS](#).

Principal Contractor/Client

Principal Contractor/Clients have a responsibility to manage their sites, The [Health and Safety at Work \(General\) \(Guernsey\) Ordinance, 1987, section 2](#), also places duties on employers to protect persons other than their employees, including members of the public and visitors. Before you appoint the services of a contractor, you need to be confident that they are competent to carry out their tasks safely.

See [contractors-and-visitors](#) for a simple contractor competency questionnaire and for more complex work such as design scaffolds see [Scaffold planning and work at height activities checklist](#).

NOTE: The term “client” refers to the company that has requested the scaffolding contractor to erect scaffolding, which could be the principal contractor, contractor, hirer, or user.

Prior to works

Before any work starts on site, there needs to be an exchange of information between scaffolders and clients. This should include being made aware of any hazards.

Scaffold contractors and clients have a duty to consider and control the risks to the general public as early as possible, at the enquiry stage, planning stage (i.e., planning, permit application, traffic management, segregation, hoarding, lighting, signage, etc) and throughout the life of each project.

Exchange information such as:

- Highlighting the location of any on site hazards – asbestos, overhead power lines, underground services.
- Making them aware of any safety controls on site such as one-way systems for vehicles or parking areas.
- Making them aware of any specific issues such as busy periods, public areas etc.
- Highlighting any site rules, expectations and advising them of emergency arrangements for the site.

It may be suitable to provide some of this information in writing (e.g., in the form of an information sheet or site induction) where appropriate, as evidence of providing the contractor with information on the health and safety risks they may face and the controls in place to deal with the risks.

The general public will not be aware of the hazards associated with scaffolding activities making them more vulnerable to the possibility of injury, during erection, use, alteration, maintenance and dismantling of scaffold structures.

Typically, the main scaffolding hazards and risks involving the public are:

- Transport (risk of scaffolding vehicles injuring pedestrians)

- Work at height during scaffolding operations (with risk of falling scaffold tubes, boards and fittings)
- Work at height during building works (other trades working on completed scaffold with risk of their materials falling e.g., bricks)
- Pedestrians (risk of personal injury walking into scaffolding structures).

Typically, the main control measures are:

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| • Client and main contractor control measures (e.g., hoarding, site segregation, pedestrian and vehicle segregation). | • Out of hours working. |
| • Methodical scaffold erection/dismantle operations. | • Protection gantries. |
| • Exclusion zones (sometimes with lookouts). | • Pavement scaffolds. |
| | • Protection fans. |
| | • Sheeting and netting, Brickguards. |
| | • Tethering of tools. |

Appropriate site-specific RAMS should be provided to clients by scaffold contractors before works are undertaken in order that they can review them before works begin. You also need to find out from the contractor matters such as:

- Who is in control of the work and who any concerns should be raised with?
- Who is responsible for supervision of the workers?
- Do they need you to provide any support or assistance or additional information?
- Decide who is responsible for pedestrian and vehicle management.
- Consider the use of protection gantries, pavement scaffolds and protection fans and clarify size and nature of any required exclusion zones.
- Where possible, work should be undertaken at times that reduce contact with the public (e.g., engineering hours, weekend work) and warning signs/barriers should be in place at each end of the structure to warn the public that works are in progress above.
- Describe how controls will be implemented, monitored and reviewed.

The use of brickguards, sheeting and netting on scaffolds does not provide protection from falling objects during scaffolding operations as they are erected after scaffolding is erected and removed prior to dismantling scaffolding, therefore exclusion zones should be prioritised and combined with further control measures including tool tethering and a dropped object prevention policy as appropriate.

Where the public cannot be excluded, effective physical protection should be provided to prevent persons being struck by falling tools or materials.

When planning for work in built up areas you should:

- Assess the risks and decide on control measures in consultation with users.
- Decide who is responsible for pedestrian and vehicle management.
- Consider the use of protection gantries, pavement scaffolds and protection fans.
- Consideration must be given to suitable barrier systems, which safely separate the pedestrians from any hazards, and you should clarify size and nature of any required exclusion zones.
- Describe how controls will be implemented, monitored and reviewed.

Use of tethers has become more common where impact drivers are routinely used. This is because the tool is quite heavy compared to a podger/spanner and may need to be used at an awkward angle.

If tool tethering is selected – as one of a number of other appropriate control measures you should ensure that the tethers are purchased from a reputable supplier (e.g., Certificate of Conformity and Test Certificate) and an **appropriate inspection system is selected** with advice from manufacturer and the company's Health & Safety Advisor (e.g., pre-use inspection, weekly inspection by foreman/lead scaffolder, quarterly inspection by company).

Safe System of Work

There must be a safe system of work in place. Whilst its content will vary according to the scale and complexity of the job and level of risk involved, it should include a Risk Assessment and Method statement (RAMS) containing the following:

- a. **The scope of the work** to be carried out including the duty of the scaffold and any sheeting requirements and the methods to be used for tying the structure.
- b. **Location.**
- c. **Dates and time** or by sequence of events, or following other operations.
- d. **Erection and dismantling procedure.**
- e. **Who is doing it.**
- f. **How will it be done.** Details of any measures to protect third parties or members of the public.
Decide who is responsible for pedestrian and vehicle management.
Consider the additional hazards that are created while the scaffold is being erected, modified or dismantled and decide on appropriate measures.
Describe how you will control any identified risks.
Consider the use of protection gantries, pavement scaffolds and protection fans and clarify size of any required exclusion zones.
- g. **Emergency procedures** including emergency & rescue plan and accident investigation and reporting methods.
- h. **Handover procedure and Inspection arrangements.** Clarify who is inspecting the scaffold, client or scaffold contractor.
- i. **Details of PPE** required and other measures such as barriers, signs and rescue equipment.
- j. **Any specific limitations** or constraints regarding the work.
- k. **References.** It may be necessary to cross-refer to design drawings, specifications, procedures, job specific risk assessments or permits to work.
- l. **Amendments.** Arrangements for agreeing modifications to any safe system of work.

RAMS should be signed by all personnel carrying out the work, to confirm that they have seen and understood the contents. See [NASC SG7:19 Risk Assessments Method Statement](#) template showing industry best practice.

Examples where method statements would be expected would include designed scaffolds/roof work etc.
[Risk Assessment/ Method Statement review.](#)

Scaffold Design

Unless a scaffold is assembled to a generally recognised standard configuration, such as National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASC) [Technical Guidance TG20](#) for tube and fitting scaffolds or similar guidance from manufacturers' instructions for system scaffolds, the scaffold must be designed by bespoke calculation, and by a competent person. This will ensure the scaffold will have adequate strength, rigidity and stability while it is erected, used and dismantled.

Scaffold structures that normally require bespoke design Include:

- all shoring scaffolds (dead, raking, flying)
- cantilevered scaffolds
- truss-out scaffolds
- façade retention
- access scaffolds with more than the 2 working lifts
- buttressed free-standing scaffolds
- temporary roofs and temporary buildings
- support scaffolds
- complex loading bays
- mobile and static towers
- free standing scaffolds
- temporary ramps and elevated roadways
- staircases and fire escapes (unless covered by manufacturer's instructions)
- spectator terraces and seating stands
- bridge scaffolds
- towers requiring guys or ground anchors
- offshore scaffolds
- pedestrian footbridges or walkways
- slung and suspended scaffolds
- protection fans
- pavement gantries
- marine scaffolds
- boiler scaffolds
- power line crossings
- lifting gantries and towers
- steeple scaffolds
- radial / splayed scaffolds on contoured facades
- system scaffolds outside manufacturers' guidance
- sign board supports
- sealing end structures such as temporary screens
- temporary storage on site
- masts, lighting towers and transmission towers
- advertising hoardings/banners
- rubbish chute
- any scaffold structure not mentioned above that falls outside the 'compliant scaffold' criteria in TG20 or similar guidance from manufacturers of system scaffolds.

During the Works

It is important that contractors are not just left to their own devices during the works. You also need to be aware of whether they are working in a safe manner, and where relevant adhering to the RAMS they provided. For example:

- Is work being carried out with the fall protection they said they would use?
- Are workers wearing appropriate protective equipment?
- Have risks to your workers and/or visitors been controlled as agreed?
- Are measures in place to provide complete protection to the public?

Where concerns are identified, these must be raised with the supervisor. If the contractor does not respond with corrective action, you must consider acting, such as terminating the contract, to ensure that the work does not continue in an unsafe manner.

The public must be excluded from the area around the work during scaffold erection, modification and dismantling. This requirement may involve getting permission to close streets or footpaths while the scaffold is being erected or dismantled.

Where the public cannot be excluded, effective physical protection **must** be provided to prevent persons being struck by falling tools or materials. Public access to the scaffold should, so far as is practicable, be made difficult by providing hoardings and/or sheeting and by removing or preventing the use of access ladders at a lower level.

Handover

The HSE recommends that clients, for safety and traceability reasons, instruct scaffold contractors to issue them with a handover certificate for each completed and inspected scaffold, adapted scaffold, or completed section of scaffolding. The HSE also recommends clients sign the handover certificate confirming that they have accepted this inspected structure, the information contained in the scaffolding contractor's handover certificate can also fulfil the requirements of a 'First Use Inspection'.

The scaffolding contractor should ensure that, at the time of handing over the scaffold to the client, the scaffolding is suitable to perform the duty for which it was intended and has been built to the client's specification, is safe and is structurally sound.

The Handover Certificate then demonstrates that the client has accepted that the scaffold is fit for purpose and has acknowledged their responsibility to ensure that mandatory inspections are performed, and to follow any loading limitations and any restrictions for its use as imposed by the design/specification of the scaffold.

A copy of the report should be retained on site, identifying the person responsible for further modifications and inspections of the scaffold. [Handover example](#).

Scaffold structures erected to **engineered design drawings**, require inspection and handover by a competent person. Design drawings should be made available to clients and scaffold inspector upon handover as well as any relevant drawings or loading information.

Scaffold Inspection

It is the clients responsibility to ensure that The scaffold is inspected in accordance with the requirements of **[The Safety of Employees \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Ordinance, 1952](#)**, Sections 38 and 39:

- Prior to being taken into use for the first time.
- After any significant alteration or adverse weather.
- After any event likely to affect its stability.
- Regular intervals not exceeding 7 days.

An inspection record should be made available on site noting any defects or matters that could give rise to a risk to health and safety and any corrective actions taken, even when those actions are taken promptly, as this assists with the identification of any recurring problem.

All scaffolding inspection must be carried out by a competent person whose combination of knowledge, training and experience is appropriate for the type and complexity of the scaffold. [Inspection example](#).

Internal edge protection

Principal contractors and scaffold contractors often debate the requirement for internal edge protection.

Whilst the scaffold must comply with the law, we must not lose sight of why the scaffold is required in the first place.

[NASC Guidance Note Internal Edge Protection on Scaffold Platforms](#) gives some practical guidance on how to comply with the Work at Height Regulations 2005 (WAHR) with regard to internal edge protection.

Where there is a likelihood of persons or materials falling and causing injury at the internal edge of the scaffold nearest to the structure, the structure requires a physical barrier of double guardrails and toe boards.

The minimum distance from the working platform to the top of the upper guardrail shall be at least 950mm, and the gap between it and any intermediate guardrail and toe board should not exceed 470mm.

However, it is recognised that the installation of complete internal edge protection can prevent or make work difficult when installing mullions, windows, cladding and brickwork etc. Therefore, enforcement agencies will assess compliance with legislation in a sensible and practical manner, provided a safe system of work is in place and a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the work activity has been carried out.

This safe system of work may allow for some internal edge protection to be removed for a limited period of time to allow for a specific task to be carried out, providing other measures to prevent or mitigate a fall are in place and enforced.

If scaffold clients require less than full internal edge protection

The requirement for internal edge protection depends on the size of the service gap: the gap between the inner edge of the scaffold platform and the building, as illustrated below.

However, because the installation of complete internal edge protection can impede or even prevent certain work, a safe system of work, following a risk assessment, may be used in place of some or all internal protection.



If the service gap is less than the width of a scaffold board and there is no door or window openings through which an operative could fall, internal guard rails are not normally required.



If the service gap exceeds 225mm and presents a risk of injury, but not a risk of a person falling a single guard rail may be required with a safe system of work that includes supervision, training and instruction.

The picture on the left shows a gap less than the width of a board, whereas the picture on the right shows a gap of approximately one board's width (225mm).

Please note that a gap larger than 225mm needs very careful risk assessing. It may also be prudent for the client/principal contractor/user to put in place a Permit to Work system when a single guardrail is used. See [NASC SG29 17](#).



If the service gap exceeds 225mm and a person could fall or suffer injury, double guard rails should be installed unless alternative arrangements are made to control the risk of falling persons or materials. Inner toe boards may be required for material retention subject to risk assessment.



If an operative is required to work from an inner platform where the service gap exceeds 225mm that presents a risk of injury, double guard rails should be provided at the inner platform. Alternatively, a safe system of work must be employed including a full body harness and restraint lanyard to prevent the operative falling from the inner edge unless another suitable means of protection is determined from the risk assessment.

Scaffold contractors

Scaffolding providers must ensure that the scaffolds they handover are compliant. This also applies to the internal edge protection as described above. However, on occasions users may request that internal edge protection is either omitted or left incomplete (e.g., a single guardrail only).

Where the internal edge protection is incomplete or no internal edge protection has been requested by the client, scaffolding providers should advise the client on a Handover Certificate that the scaffold does not comply with current legislation and that they have a duty to prevent falls, of persons or materials, from any part of the scaffold, which in the absence of guardrails and toe boards means implementing a safe system of work.

This could include the provision of other means of fall protection, limiting access to authorised people only, and ensuring that those performing the task are provided with adequate information, instruction, training and supervision as part of a safe system of work (or a permit to work system if it is appropriate).

Once the scaffold is handed over the client must be advised that the scaffold then becomes their responsibility.

Unauthorised modifications to scaffolds

The consequences of any unauthorised alterations/modifications to scaffolds could potentially result in a fatality or serious injury to contractors, the general public or yourself and may result in damage to adjacent property.

Scaffolds should only be modified by competent scaffolders who have been authorised to do so by the scaffold contractor. It is also unacceptable for the client/user to authorise alterations without prior consent from the scaffold contractor as it may invalidate their insurance cover and could be an offence under Section 8 of [Health and Safety at Work \(General\) \(Guernsey\) Ordinance, 1987](#). [NASC SG36-18](#).

Examples of unapproved modifications may include:

- Removing/moving ties or other components that are obstructing access to a work area.
- Removing planks from hop-ups to provide clearer access for façade work.
- Moving planks to create temporary work platforms in other locations.
- Removing adjustable bases to undertake work on the supporting foundation.
- Removing/moving ledgers, transoms, braces or other components.

Clients can prevent unapproved modifications by:

- Preferencing engineering controls over administrative controls during tender and scaffold design phases.
- Sequencing work so that scaffolds are appropriately configured before other trades begin to work in these areas.
- Not directing work in areas where the scaffold requires modification to prevent interference with the work.
- Having regular inspections to identify where unauthorised modifications are occurring.
- Having site rules around unauthorised modifications of scaffolds.
- Having a review process when unauthorised modifications are observed that identifies and addresses the root cause.

Scaffolders can assist with preventing unapproved modifications by:

- Consulting with the principal contractor on preferred scaffold configuration during design phase.
- Consulting with principal contractor regarding anti-tamper devices.
- Providing documentation containing sufficient detail, such that mandatory 7-day inspections can determine whether the scaffold has been modified.
- Documenting scaffolding work performed/completed (e.g. photographs).
- Notifying principal contractor if unapproved modifications are observed, or are requested by other trades.

Good planning and communication with all contractors will help prevent unauthorised scaffold modifications.

Refer to NASC website at www.nasc.org.uk for latest editions of the guidance listed below.

Health & Safety Guidance Notes

SG4 Preventing Falls in Scaffolding

SG25 Access and Egress from Scaffolds

SG30 Working from Vehicles

SG32 Guidance on the Provision of Inside Board Brackets

SG7 Guide to Risk Assessment & Method Statement (RAMS)

SG19 A Formulating a Rescue Plan

SG29 Internal Edge Protection

SG35 Handover of Scaffold Structures

SG6 Manual Handling in the Scaffolding Industry

Technical Guidance Notes

TG4 Anchorage Systems

TG20 A Comprehensive Guide to Good Practice for Tube and Fitting Scaffolding.

Competence Guidance Documents

CISRS Cap 609 General Information Booklet

NASC TG20:21 Webinar available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRkl3gpues4&t=1095s>

How much does it cost and what happens next?

Type	Application time	Fee
Standard	7 or more days prior to erection	£82
Urgent	Less than 7 days prior to erection	£120
Retrospective	After erection has commenced	£165

Each permit should be applied for at least 7 days in advance of planned start date of erection.

Once your application has been submitted and we have all the information required to process your application, your permit will be issued to you in around five working days.

A standard application costs £82 where the application was made 7 days or more than 7 days prior to the proposed commencement of work.

An urgent application costs £120 where the application was made less than 7 days prior to the proposed commencement of work.

A retrospective application where the application was made after the commencement of work costs £165.

Invoices will be issued monthly; queries should be directed to housing.invoices@gov.gg



Data Protection - How we collect and use information

The States of Guernsey Health and Safety Executive processes personal data for the purpose of enforcing Health & Safety at work and associated legislation. The personal data collected will vary depending on your business with us, but will be no more than is required for that legitimate and lawful purpose. We may obtain information about you from third parties for any lawful purpose in accordance with the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2017 ("DPL"). We may also share your personal data with certain other organisations if the DPL allows us to. All the personal data held by The States of Guernsey Health and Safety Executive will be processed in accordance with the DPL. If you wish to know more about the information we have about you, or about the way we use it, you can check our website page www.gov.gg