



Provision of welfare facilities at transient construction sites

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Construction Information Sheet No 46

HSE information sheet

Introduction

This information sheet is aimed at employers and the self-employed in construction and those who control construction work. It gives guidance on the welfare facilities which should be made available to workers on transient construction sites.

For the purposes of this information sheet, a transient construction site is where short duration construction work is carried out by people working at one or many locations (typically short duration work covers work of up to a week's duration). For example, emergency works, small-scale maintenance at fixed premises, maintenance work carried out by or on behalf of utilities, etc. Construction work of a longer duration carried out while moving over a continuous geographical area, eg major roadworks, cable laying contracts, etc, is also considered a transient construction site.

Duties

Whoever has overall control of the construction site is responsible for ensuring that the legal requirements for welfare are met. If you are an employer or are self-employed you have a duty to ensure that everyone working under your control is provided with suitable welfare facilities. In practice, the principal contractor or main contractor may decide to provide or arrange common facilities for everyone.

Planning

The availability of welfare facilities, their location and maintenance need to be considered at the planning and preparation stages of every construction project. Where the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 apply, welfare provision needs to be considered in both the pre-tender and construction phase health and safety plans. Matters to be considered when planning the welfare provision include:

- the work to be carried out and the health risks associated with it;
- the duration and number of different locations;
- the number of people working at different locations;
- the distance from welfare facilities.

General requirements

Welfare facilities include toilets, washing facilities, changing and rest areas, drinking water and eating facilities. In addition to the provision of welfare facilities, regular maintenance and cleaning of them will be required. Particularly dirty work hazardous to health, eg sewer maintenance, may require the provision of additional washing and changing facilities. Detailed information on recommended standards for welfare facilities is contained in Construction Information Sheet No 18.

Use of private and public facilities

Where the construction activity is a long way from central facilities, use of facilities in private premises such as in cafes are not considered suitable as permanent alternative arrangements. The use of private facilities may be acceptable in limited circumstances, eg where there is no alternative and the work is of no more than a week's duration. Permission, preferably in writing, should be obtained from the proprietor in advance of the work starting.

Use of public toilets is acceptable only where it is impractical to either return to facilities provided at the main base, use those at satellite compounds, or use a portable installation at the worksite.

Where public or private toilets are used they need to be readily accessible to the worksite, open at all relevant times, be at no cost to the employee, be of an acceptable standard in terms of cleanliness and have hand-washing facilities. Workers need to be made aware of the arrangements to use them and be informed of their location in advance of the work starting.

Available options

For the purposes of this information sheet, the following table gives an indication of the options available, in order of preference, for providing welfare facilities for transient construction sites.

| <i>Type of facility</i> | <i>Acceptable provision</i> |
|-------------------------|--|
| Toilets | (i) fixed installation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● at their base location ● at the satellite compound ● on site |
| | (ii) portable installation on site |
| | (iii) suitably designed vehicle incorporating a chemical toilet |
| | (iv) fixed installation near site (includes public toilets) |
| | (v) portable installation near site |
| | (vi) pre-arranged use of private facilities |
| Washing facilities | (i) hand basins/bowls as part of installations as above |
| | (ii) hand-washing facilities made available within the work vehicle with a supply of clean hot and cold, or warm water (running water so far as is reasonably practicable) |
| | (iii) provision of non-alcoholic wet wipes as an interim measure or in addition to washing facilities |
| Rest areas | (i) fixed installation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● at their base location ● at the satellite compound ● on site |
| | (ii) mobile installations on site |
| | (iii) work vehicle which is readily available and has sufficient seating |
| | (iv) facilities which are conveniently accessible to the worksite (includes private facilities) |

| | |
|--|--|
| Drinking water | (i) fixed installation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● at their base location ● at the satellite compound ● on site |
| | (ii) suitable container of drinking water adequately labelled on vehicle |
| | (iii) boiling water for hot drinks |
| Area for changing and storing clothing | (i) fixed installation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● at their base location ● at the satellite compound ● on site |
| | (ii) on vehicle if appropriate |

Examples

Below are some examples of the welfare facilities actually provided at some different types of transient construction worksites. These examples show that for all the main types of transient construction work, adequate welfare provision can be planned for and provided.

A contractor in control of motorway widening work, which extended over 5 miles, sited fixed welfare facilities to the standard outlined in Construction Information Sheet 18 Provision of welfare facilities at fixed construction sites at its main base which was located at one end of the project. Transport was made available to carry workers to and from these facilities enabling use of them at the start and end of each shift and at mealtimes. Because of the size and nature of the project the need for additional facilities was identified in the planning phase and portable units, including chemical toilets with hand-washing basins, were sited at intervals along the length of the job. The contractor arranged for daily cleaning and weekly maintenance of all the welfare facilities.

A contractor who was laying cable TV in a suburban area, which involved gangs of three-to-four workers working within a 10 mile radius of the main depot, provided portable welfare facilities, comprising toilets and hand-washing facilities at satellite compounds. These were placed so that they were accessible, in normal traffic conditions, within a 10 minute travel time period of where people were working. In addition, there was also a full range of welfare facilities, including showers, at the main depot for use at the start and end of each shift. Work vehicles were equipped with additional hand-washing facilities and seating.

A contractor who carried out short-term road repair work using gangs of three workers provided a self-contained toilet which was towed by the work vehicle. This supplemented the provision of facilities available at the main depot. Hand-washing facilities comprising of a basin, soap and towels, a container for used disposable towels and a means of heating water, were provided in the work vehicle.

Two county councils in control of mobile minor roadworks provided toilet, mess and washing facilities incorporated into a suitably equipped vehicle, see figure 1.

A contractor involved in small-scale maintenance work at occupied premises formally arranged with the clients, before the work started, for the workers to use the welfare facilities on the premises.

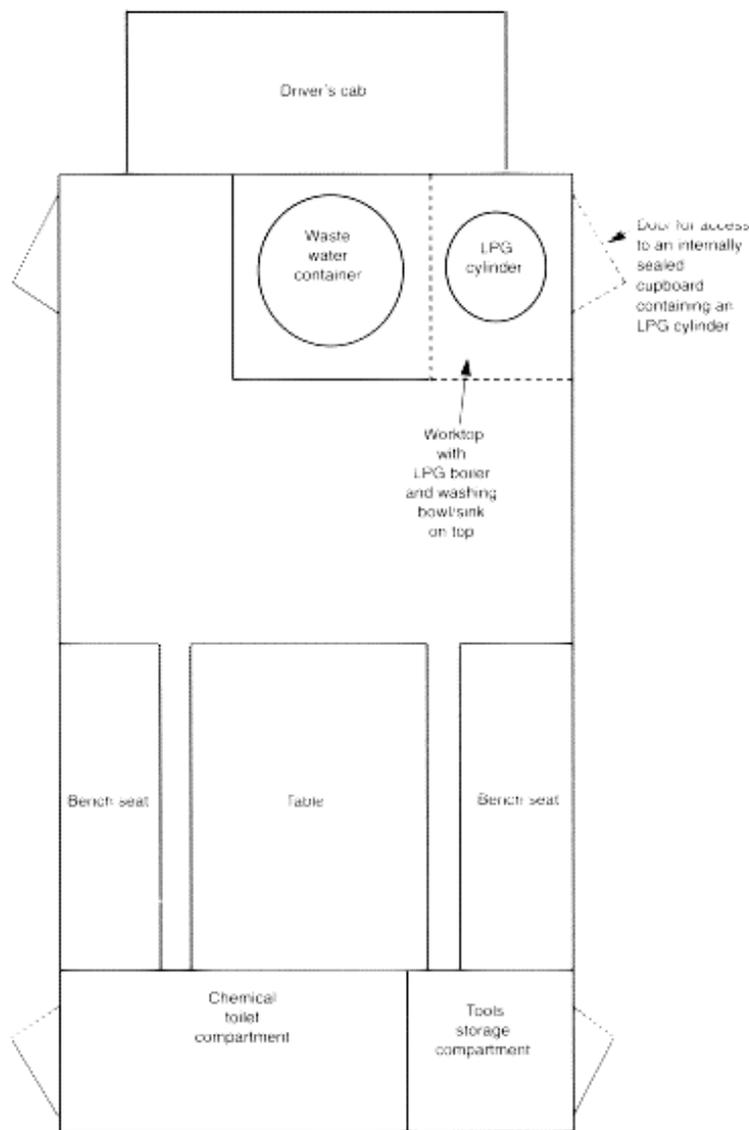


Figure 1 Transient welfare accommodation based on a Luton van

References and further information

HSE *A guide to the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996* INDG220 HSE Books 1996 (also available in priced packs of 10, ISBN 0 7176 1161 2)

HSE *Provision of welfare facilities at fixed construction sites* CIS18 (revised) HSE Books 1996

HSE *Health and safety in construction* HSG150 HSE Books 1996 ISBN 0 7176 1143 4

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This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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