

Site environmental management systems

An environmental management system (EMS) provides an organised, systematic and consistent approach, allowing organisations to address environmental concerns through allocation of resources, assignment of responsibilities, and provision and continuous monitoring and evaluation of procedures, systems and processes.

It is recognised that adopting standard environmental management policies and practices not only helps in protecting the environment, but also brings business benefits in terms of reduction of waste, energy use and improved efficiency. It also reduces the risk of causing incidents that may result in enforcement action, which could lead to prosecution.

A company's EMS will define what plans and procedures, together with the appropriate documents, will need to be completed at a site level in what is known as a construction environmental management plan (CEMP).



Before any work starts on site

- All contractual and client documentation must be reviewed to identify the site-specific environmental requirements, including planning conditions, and a CEMP must be prepared to identify the relevant objectives, issues and controls.
- All necessary environmental licences must be identified and granted (such as discharges of water and effluent, tree preservation orders (TPOs), and sites producing hazardous waste and waste management licences).
- Environmentally sensitive areas must be identified and protected (such as drains, rivers, streams, groundwater and areas containing protected plants and animals).
- Suitable and sufficient arrangements must be in place for the management, storage and disposal of waste (such as the production of a site waste management plan); for dealing with environmental emergencies (such as spillages and groundwater contamination); and for notifying the relevant authority.
- Arrangements must be established for liaison and communication with local, neighbouring and interested parties (residents, shops, businesses and schools etc.).

When work has started on site

- The company (or site) environmental policy must be available and displayed on site, with responsibilities and relevant requirements for environmental management clearly defined, allocated, highlighted and communicated at site inductions and on the site noticeboards.
- All site personnel (including sub-contractors) must be made aware of the project's environmental issues and standards through site inductions, briefings and toolbox talks, and method statements must include sufficient control measures for environmental management.
- A suitable and sufficient monitoring regime must be in place to ensure that the site's environmental requirements are being met (such as relevant energy monitoring, environmental inspections for oil and waste storage, protected areas, water quality, and noise and dust).
- Environmental records must be continuously maintained to facilitate good auditing processes (such as waste transfer notes, consignment notes, and noise and water monitoring), and a process must be in place to review ongoing performance and identify areas for improvement.

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