

Health and Safety actions during school construction projects



Checklist for School leaders

The purpose of this checklist is to help you understand the actions that need to be taken during a property construction project. Your project manager should also be able to help you through the construction process.

Step 1: Ensure relevant documentation is available

- Risk and hazard registers
- Asbestos Management Plan
- Asbestos Management Survey (if applicable)
- Asbestos Refurbishment or Demolition Surveys (if applicable)
- Communications to school community and neighbours advising them of arrangements for the work i.e., major redevelopments, new builds, and any significant issues such as asbestos removal

Step 2: Pre-construction activities

- Assess School Access Plan and arrange for police vetting where required, allowing at least six weeks for police vetting.
- Attend the pre-start meeting with the main contractor.
- Walk around the school site with the main contractor to highlight key risks and hazards.
- Identify key people involved in the project and their responsibilities e.g., site manager, project manager.
- Agree site protocols with the main contractor and communicate to all staff e.g., no smoking/vaping, music, bad language, contact with staff and students.
- Provide the school's risk and hazard registers to the project team.
- Ensure learning support students' needs have been considered and alternative arrangements made in case the students need to be relocated or require safe access routes.
- Ensure the construction zone is separated from the school site i.e., fenced. The main contractor will be in control of the site and all visitors will need approval from the site manager to enter.
- Identify safe travel routes around the construction site for staff and students.

- Acknowledge and understand the arrangements outlined in the Site-Specific Safety Plan (SSSP).
- Agree on a schedule of progress reports and meetings with the project manager and/or main site contractor.
- Agree communication channels between all parties and timeframes/milestones. Agree emergency response plan with main site contractor e.g., fire, earthquake, flood, COVID-19 outbreak, and lockdown situations.
- Agree separate access and delivery times for machinery, equipment, and removal of waste from site i.e., before or after school hours.
- Advise contractors if school events may interfere with the delivery of the project e.g., NCEA assessments.
- Arrange access to services i.e., power, water, internet, fire alarm, and after-hours security system.
- Establish and agree project issues escalation process for all parties.
- Ensure you have a copy of the Refurbishment or Demolition Asbestos Surveys if your building was built before 2000 and if any refurbishment or demolition work is being undertaken.
- Obtain a copy of the Asbestos Clearance Certificate for removal of any asbestos and update the Asbestos Management Plan after the removal work is complete.

Step 3: During Construction

- Attend Project Control Group (PCG) meetings or equivalent and ensure you receive a copy of the meeting minutes .
- Ensure you receive clear communication at the agreed timeframes/milestones as outlined in the SSSP.
- Ensure there is no access to the construction zone by school staff, students, or others unless prior permission is granted from the site manager.
- If permission is granted, ensure visitors wear appropriate personal protection equipment.
- Visitors must sign in and out of the Site Register, complete induction, and remain supervised at all times.
- Ensure there is a NZ COVID Tracer QR code at the main site entrance.
- Follow the escalation process i.e., if you are concerned or have issues about the construction site, speak to the site manager.

Step 4: Construction completion

- Ensure you receive a thorough handover of the site, including buildings and outdoor areas, after construction is complete.
- Ensure you are provided with the Code of Compliance Certificate (CCC). If a CCC is not yet available, ensure there is a Certificate of Public Use issued in the interim.
- Ensure you obtain copies of any maintenance manuals and care instructions so that warranties are not voided.
- Update your school's risk and hazard registers.

Important links:

- **Asbestos management plans | WorkSafe:** www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/asbestos/asbestos-management-plans
- **Managing asbestos in schools | Ministry of Education:** www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/health-and-safety-management/asbestos/#sh-asbestos
- **Health and Safety requirements for boards and school leaders | Ministry of Education:** www.education.govt.nz/school/health-safety-and-wellbeing/health-and-safety-requirements/h-and-s-for-boards-of-trustees-and-school-leaders/
- **Police vetting for school property contractors | Ministry of Education:** www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/projects-and-design/role-of-the-board/early-stages/police-vetting/