



Method Statements

What is a Method Statement?

Method statements are hugely important when it comes to the health and safety of projects, particularly in the construction industry. These documents are used alongside risk assessments to make sure certain high-risk tasks and activities involved in a project are safe.

Method statements are documents that detail exactly how to carry out work safely. When it comes to ensuring building site health and safety, method statements are key.

The purpose of method statements is to describe the safety precautions to put in place to control risks identified in the risk assessment. They detail the equipment to use during projects, and the control equipment and PPE required to keep workers and site visitors safe while tasks are ongoing.

Each task is broken down into steps, and the method statement assesses the hazards involved in each step before describing exactly how to control hazards and mitigate risks.

The statement should also cover the hazards associated with by-products of tasks and activities. For example, if any waste is produced, the document needs to cover how to dispose of that waste safely. It will also include more general information, such as how many hours to spend on each task, the sequence of planned work, management and responsibilities, and emergency procedures.

What's the Difference between Method Statements and Risk Assessments?

As the two most common health and safety documents, risk assessments and method statements are often confused with each other. While both documents aim to improve the safety of work sites, they're not the same thing. Risk assessments identify and assess the hazards and risks involved in projects and suggest control measures. Method statements expand on the control measures outlined in the risk assessment, detailing how, when, and why you should implement measures.

When Should You Write a Method Statement?

You should write up method statements before the tasks or activities they refer to are completed — but after the completion of risk assessments. Once you carry out a risk assessment, you should create a method statement using the information outlined in the risk assessment about potential hazards and the risks they pose.

The documents also need to be reviewed and rewritten whenever tasks are carried out in a new location or using new equipment. If the factors affecting the health and safety of projects change, method statements need to be reviewed to make sure safety precautions are still relevant.

Why Are Method Statements Important?

Method statements don't just suggest control measures; they detail exactly how to implement them. There's no room for confusion — teams can use these statements as a checklist for safety precautions.

Method statements are particularly important in the construction industry because many everyday tasks involve high-level risks. Workers use dangerous equipment, work from heights, and are often exposed to hazardous materials. Injuries in the construction industry are common, and the fatal injury rate in this industry is three times higher than the all-industry rate. But with method statements, construction companies can make sure control measures mitigate risks and protect workers, site visitors and members of the public from harm.