ndtg

National Demolition Training Group

BE SMART
BE SAFE

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BE SMART. BE SAFE. IS ABOUT MORE THAN RULES.

It's about thinking before acting, understanding the risks around you, and making the right decisions every time.

Being smart means planning the task, using the right equipment, and following the agreed method.

Being safe means staying alert, looking out for others, and never taking shortcuts.

- IF YOU'RE UNSURE — **STOP.**
- IF SOMETHING LOOKS WRONG — **ASK.**
- IF IT DOESN'T FEEL SAFE — **DON'T DO IT.**

Demolition Safety Guide. This guide is designed to help everyone involved in demolition—especially new starters, labourers, Demolition Refurbishment Operatives (DROs), and plant operators—identify potential hazards and adopt safe, effective working practices.

Under the *Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015 and BS 6187:2011 – Code of Practice for Full & Partial Demolition*, it is a legal requirement that **all demolition or dismantling work is planned and documented before it begins.** That means every project, no matter the size, must have a Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) in place.

We all know that planning is essential. Every site has its own risks, and it's critical to follow the agreed methods outlined in your RAMS. Never change a process without first consulting your supervisor or site manager.

To stay informed and alert:

- Attend your **Induction Training**
- Engage in **Daily Task Briefings**
- Participate in **Toolbox Talks**

These sessions are there to keep safety front of mind and ensure everyone is aware of known risks.

Still, accidents happen. Why? Often because someone was untrained, distracted, or took a shortcut. Accidents are unplanned—but preventable. So, before you act, think: What could go wrong? Every action has a consequence.

This guide is here to help you avoid the pitfalls of outdated habits or rushed decisions. Just because something's "always been done that way" doesn't mean it's safe.

Safety is no accident. If you're unsure about any demolition procedure—**ask**. Still unsure? **Ask again.** Still not sure???? **Show me.**

Please note: this booklet provides general guidance and may not cover every unique situation, such as post-incident procedures or individual training needs. For the latest updates, visit **www.nfdc-demolition.com**

Asbestos Safety Alert: What You Need to Know

Every year, asbestos-related diseases claim the lives of over 5,000 people in the UK — mostly due to past exposure while working with asbestos-containing materials. Although asbestos use has been banned, thousands of tonnes remain hidden in older buildings, embedded in more than 3,000 different products.

1. WORKING WITH ASBESTOS

Why It's Dangerous

Asbestos becomes hazardous when disturbed — drilling, cutting, breaking, or damaging materials can release microscopic fibres into the air. Breathing in these fibres can lead to serious, often fatal, health conditions.

Where Asbestos Might Be Found

You could encounter asbestos in:

- Sprayed insulation on steel beams, concrete, and ceilings
- Pipe and boiler lagging
- Asbestos Insulating Board (AIB) in walls, ceiling tiles, fire doors, loft fire breaks, soffits
- Asbestos cement in roofing, wall panels, pipes, guttering and water tanks
- Decorative coatings like textured plaster (e.g., Artex)
- Gaskets, ropes, seals.
- Textiles including fire blankets, curtains, and sofa covers

This is not an exhaustive list. Asbestos may be hidden beneath floors, inside walls, or within the structural frame of a building.

Before You Start Work

No refurbishment or demolition work should begin without a proper asbestos survey.

If you discover any material not listed in the survey but suspect it could contain asbestos:

1. **Stop work immediately**
2. **Tell others in the vicinity**
3. **Leave the area**
4. **Report it to your supervisor**
5. **Quarantine the area**
6. **Wait for testing by a qualified professional**

If asbestos is confirmed, then it should be removed by trained operatives, either non licensed, notifiable non licensed, or licenced contractors.

Training Requirements

- Everyone working on a demolition site must complete **asbestos awareness training**.
- **Specialist training** is legally required for anyone involved in the removal of asbestos-containing materials.
- **Asbestos training** is required to be refreshed annually.

NEVER – use power tools on asbestos materials, this will create airborne dust.

NEVER – go home wearing clothes that may be contaminated with asbestos.

NEVER – underestimate asbestos, it is not safe.

Remember that asbestos is dangerous when it is disturbed, so don't disturb it.

Don't become one of the **5000** that die every year in the UK

2. SITE SAFETY ESSENTIALS – BEFORE YOU START WORK

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE/RPE)

- Wear your hard hat, hi-vis vest, safety boots, and any additional PPE/RPE as specified in the RAMS.
- Ensure your RPE is face-fit tested and only use it if you are clean-shaven.
- Request extra protection if needed for hands, eyes, ears, skin, or breathing.

Site Induction & Access

- Attend the full site induction before starting any work.
- Be aware of all designated red exclusion zones (“NO GO AREAS”) and amber working zones.
- Sign in and out of the site each day.

RAMS & Briefing

- Read the RAMS or have them clearly explained to you.
- Sign the briefing sheet to confirm your understanding.
- Pay close attention to details regarding asbestos and other hazardous materials.

Training & Competence

- Be Smart – only carry out tasks you are trained for, and ask for any training you need before you start.
- If you're unsure or unfamiliar with a task, speak to your supervisor immediately.

When in Doubt – Ask

- If anything is unclear, don't guess. Ask for clarification to ensure your safety and that of others.

Most serious accidents happen **during normal everyday work**, not unusual jobs.

3. SITE SAFETY DO'S AND DON'TS

Hazards & Unsafe Conditions

- **Do not** cover holes or voids with boards or solid sheets unless the hazard is clearly marked and your supervisor is informed.
- **Do** report any unsafe behaviour or hazardous conditions to your supervisor immediately.

Working at Height

- **Do not** work at height unless you have received appropriate and up-to-date training.
- **Do** speak up if you see anyone working unsafely or in a dangerous situation.

Site Access & Security

- **Do not** leave access gates open, especially vehicle entry points.
- **Do** always keep all safety fencing and barriers in place and secure.
- **Do** not unclip or move 'Heras' fencing unless it's an emergency.
- **Do** ensure safe access and egress is always maintained.

Asbestos Awareness

- **Do** stop work and clear the area if you suspect any material may contain asbestos and is not listed in the Refurbishment & Demolition Survey.
- **Do** notify your supervisor immediately.

Restricted Areas

- **Do not** enter red exclusion zones under any circumstances.

Hygiene & Welfare

- **Do** wash your hands before eating, drinking, or smoking.
- **Do** remove overalls and wash up before taking breaks or leaving site.

Service Safety

- **Do not** assume any utilities service is disconnected; **always check** with your supervisor or chargehand first.

Emergency Preparedness

- **Do** familiarise yourself with site emergency procedures, including evacuation routes, muster points, and first aid contacts.

Structural Safety

- **Do not** remove any temporary support systems unless authorised and competent to do so.
- **Do not** overload floors with waste materials, debris, or loose rubbish from the work area.

4. WORKING AT HEIGHT & ACCESS EQUIPMENT SAFETY GUIDELINES

- **Scaffolding** must be correctly erected and inspected by a competent person before use. Never use untested or uninspected access equipment.
- Only trained and authorised personnel are permitted to erect scaffolding towers.
- **Do not cover floor openings** with sheet materials unless hazard signage is clearly displayed and the issue is reported to your supervisor.
- **Ladders** must be in good condition, securely tied or footed, and set at a 75° angle. Ladders are for access only—never use them as a working platform.
- **Never work at height without** proper edge protection. Ensure all edge protection is securely installed and correctly positioned.
- **Avoid overloading floors**. Clear debris and waste progressively to maintain a safe working environment.

- **Do not remove scaffold ties** under any circumstances.
- Establish and maintain a clearly marked **red exclusion zone** beneath any PASMA tower, with visible signage to alert others.
- **Wheel stops** must be regularly checked and maintained to ensure effectiveness.
- When working at height where there's a risk of falling, wear a properly fitted **safety harness** attached to a secure anchor point above head height.
- Ensure your harness has a valid inspection certificate and that you've received training in its correct use.
- Avoid working at height if safer alternatives are available.
- Take extra care when working above live areas, public zones, or access/egress points.

Many falls occur from **low heights**, not just major structures

5. HOT WORKS SAFETY GUIDELINES

To ensure a safe working environment during hot works operations, follow these updated best practices:

Preparation & Permits

- **Remove all combustible materials** from the hot works area and surrounding zones.
- **Obtain a valid Hot Works Permit** before starting any work.
- **Set up physical barriers** and display **amber restricted zone warning signs** around the cutting area.

Fire Safety Measures

- **Have dedicated firefighting equipment** readily available—do not use equipment from site fire points.
- **Assign a fire watch:** An appointed second person must monitor the area during and for **at least 1 hour after** hot works conclude.
- **Ensure a method to raise the fire alarm** is always accessible.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- **Wear a face-fitted mask** with the correct filter or a **powered helmet respirator** during cutting operations.
- **Always use hearing and eye protection** when operating grinders.

Equipment Safety

- **Inspect hand tools** before and after use.
- **Check that grinding safety guards** are correctly positioned for the intended cut.
- **Only trained personnel** should:
  - Change cutting or grinding discs
  - Install cutting wheels on machines

Disc Handling & Usage

- **Avoid twisting or bending** cutting/grinding discs during use.
- **Use the correct disc type** for the specific task.
- **Never use discs** that have been exposed to **water, oil, fuel, or other contaminants**.

Many fires start because no fire watch was in place.

6. VIBRATORY & PERCUSSIVE TOOLS – SAFE USE GUIDELINES

To ensure safe and effective operation of handheld vibrating tools, follow these updated best practices:

Equipment Checks

- Inspect all tools before use. Ensure points, chisels, discs, and blades are sharp and in good condition.
- Never use damaged or worn components.
- Do not overtighten tools during operation.

Training & Briefing

- Only operate equipment if you've received proper training.
- Be briefed on the maximum daily usage time ("trigger time") for each tool.
- Keep your supervisor informed of your trigger times to maintain accurate exposure records.

Noise & Hearing Protection

- Establish a Hearing Protection Zone around the work area with clear signage.
- Always wear hearing protection when operating vibrating tools, especially if noise levels meet or exceed the upper exposure limit

Hand & Arm Safety

- Wear thick, warm gloves to protect hands, maintain warmth, and support healthy circulation.
- Use the trigger only when the tool is in contact with the work surface.
- Take regular breaks and adhere to rest periods as logged.
- Exercise fingers every 10–12 seconds during use to promote circulation.

Eye Protection

- Always wear appropriate eye protection when using handheld vibrating tools.

General Safety

- Never remove safety guards from any tools. The safety guard is there to protect you.
- Do not exceed your daily Exposure Limit Value (ELV) for trigger time with tools.
- Ensure all safety signage and zones are clearly marked and respected.

7. DUST SAFETY GUIDELINES – MODERN BEST PRACTICES

To maintain a safe and healthy work environment, follow these updated dust control protocols:

Dust Suppression

- Ensure dust suppression systems (e.g. misting or water sprays) are available and actively used.
- Stop work immediately if water supply to suppression systems is interrupted.
- Apply mist spray above dust clouds—not directly onto the dust—to prevent dispersal.

Cleaning Procedures

- Never dry sweep dusty surfaces. Always mist with water before sweeping.
- For small areas, use a vacuum cleaner equipped with HEPA filtration to safely capture dust.

Communication & Monitoring

- Alert colleagues in advance if a task will generate dust.
- Use site-wide dust monitoring to maintain safe levels and prevent public exposure.
- Deploy personal dust monitoring when necessary to assess individual exposure.

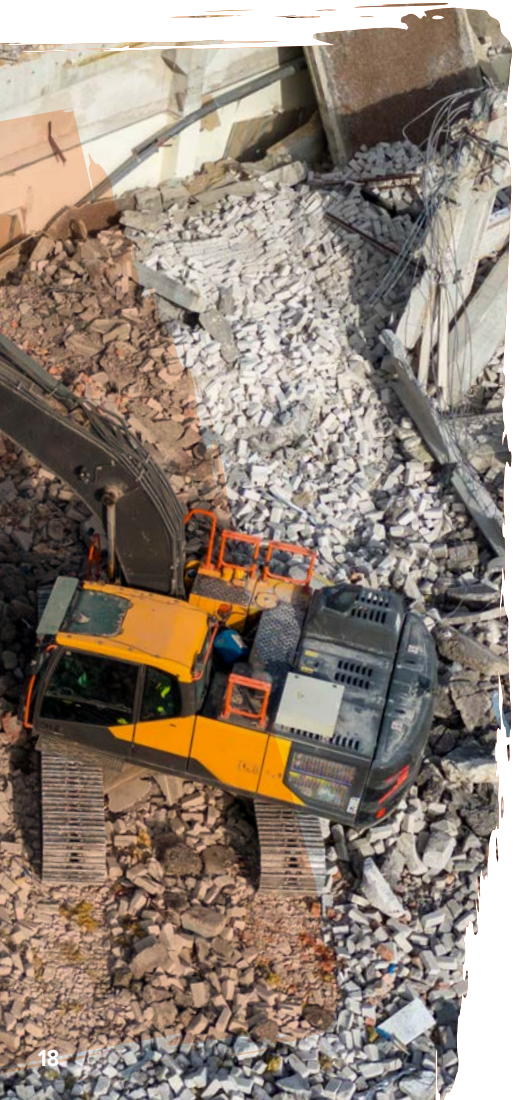
Respiratory Protection

- Use Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) only as a last resort—after all other control measures are in place.
- Always wear a properly face-fitted mask or a powered helmet respirator.
- Ensure face-fit testing is conducted at least every two years.

Environmental Considerations

- Take wind direction into account when setting up water suppression systems to maximise effectiveness and minimise spread.

Dust you can't see can still damage your lungs.



8. WORKING SAFELY AROUND PLANT ON DEMOLITION SITES

Heavy machinery poses significant risks on demolition sites. To ensure safety and reduce incidents, follow these updated best practices:

Site Access & Zoning

- **Designate and clearly sign post plant operating zones.** Restrict access to trained and authorised personnel only.
- **Implement exclusion zones** around active machinery to prevent accidental entry and serious injury.

Operator Visibility & Movement

- **Use trained traffic marshals** to guide plant operations in areas with restricted visibility, especially during reversing.
- **Fit machinery with cameras and proximity sensors** to detect intrusions and improve operator awareness.
- **Adopt one-way traffic systems** to eliminate reversing and reduce collision risks.

Crushing & Structural Hazards

- **Avoid pinch points** between plant machinery and fixed structures or debris—these are high-risk zones for crushing injuries.
- **Keep heavy plant away from unstable or partially demolished structures** to prevent unexpected collapses.

Communication & Awareness

- **Conduct daily toolbox talks** to highlight evolving site risks and layout changes.
- **Establish mandatory hearing protection zones** in high-noise areas to maintain situational awareness.

Environmental Controls

- **Monitor and control exhaust fumes**, especially from idling machinery. Use appropriate respiratory protective equipment (RPE).
- **Deploy dust suppression systems** to manage airborne hazards like asbestos and silica.

Utility Hazards

- **Identify and mark underground and overhead services** before operating plant to prevent electrocution or explosions.

Emergency Preparedness

- **Ensure clear evacuation routes and accessible first aid stations** are in place and known to all workers.

Competency & Training

- **Verify that all plant operators are certified** and trained in site-specific hazards and emergency procedures.
- **If you think you need more training**, ask your supervisor.

9. MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Your Mental Health Matters on Site

Just like physical safety, mental health is a vital part of staying safe at work. Stress, anxiety, low mood, and fatigue can affect your concentration, decision-making, and reaction time, all of which can increase the risk of accidents on a demolition site.

You are not expected to “just get on with it”. If something doesn’t feel right, speak up. Support is always available.

Spot the Signs

Look out for changes in yourself or your colleagues:

- Trouble sleeping or constant tiredness
- Feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or easily irritated
- Loss of focus or working on “autopilot”
- Withdrawing from others, not talking as much
- Loss of confidence or sudden drop in performance
- Feeling anxious, low, or unusually emotional

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Why It Matters in Demolition

Demolition can be high-pressure. Tight deadlines, working outdoors, long hours, noise, and the need for constant awareness all affect mental well-being. If you're not mentally fit, you are at a higher risk of making unsafe decisions.

Being mentally well is part of being site-safe.

Talk Early, Don't Wait

If you are struggling:

- Tell someone, your supervisor, a colleague, or a Mental Health First Aider
- Take a break if you need one
- Ask for help before a small issue becomes a big problem
- Use your company's helpline or support service if it's available

Talking is not a weakness. It is a responsible action that protects you and everyone else on site.

Simple Ways to Look After Yourself

- Get enough rest, tiredness affects judgement
- Stay hydrated and eat regularly
- Take short breaks to reset your focus
- Avoid working when you feel emotionally overwhelmed
- Keep an eye on colleagues, look after each other
- Speak up if workload or pressure becomes too much

If You Need Help Now

If you feel you are at risk or struggling with your mental health:

Do not work.

Speak to your supervisor immediately.

For confidential support, you can contact:

- **Samaritans** – 116 123
- **Mind** – 0300 123 3393
- Construction Industry Helpline **Lighthouse Club** – 0345 605 1956
- Text **HARDHAT** to 85258 for free, 24/7 crisis text support

You are never alone.
Help is always available.

10. CCDO CARD SCHEME

Certificate of Competence of Demolition Operatives (CCDO)

The CCDO Smart Card scheme offers a logical pathway from Demolition Apprentice to Demolition Manager. Exclusively issued by NDTG, the CCDO Smart Card scheme is respected industry-wide, independently recognised and endorsed. Many major developers and local authorities who commission demolition projects demand a CCDO carded workforce. NDTG makes quality CCDO training accessible for any demolition company operating in the UK today.

CCDO

Certificate of Competence
of Demolition Operatives

Why this Matters

This booklet has been put together to help everyone on-site make safer decisions.

Be Smart. Be Safe. Means thinking before you act, following the agreed plan, and speaking up when something doesn't feel right. Demolition work changes quickly, and smart choices made early can prevent serious incidents later.

No job is so urgent that it cannot be done safely. If you're unsure — **stop and ask**. Your decisions protect not only you, but everyone around you.

Each step of the career ladder ensures:

- Proper training
- Verified competence
- Safer sites
- Stronger teams
- Better career progression

A CCDO Smart Card shows your identity, training, and skill level instantly, granting you on-site access.

No job is so urgent that it cannot be done **safely**.

Your Demolition Career Pathway

A career in demolition is built step by step. The CCDO card scheme is the industry-recognised route for developing skills, experience, and on-site responsibility.

As you progress, you gain new skills, higher responsibility and better opportunities.

How to Start Your Career

To begin your CCDO pathway, you must complete:

- Health, Safety & Environment Test
- Asbestos Awareness (approved course)
- Relevant demolition experience
- An NVQ (upgrade to renewable cards)

Ready to Level Up?

If you want to progress your career:

- Call NDTG: **01442 217144** (Option 2)
- Book training: **demolition.training**

Your next promotion starts with the right training.

11. DEMOLITION CAREER LADDER...

1. Demolition Labourer

2-Year Renewable Card

- General labouring duties
- Supervised soft stripping
- Segregation of demolished materials

2. Demolition & Refurbishment Operative (DRO)

Trained: 3-Year Non-Renewable Card

Qualified: 5-Year Renewable Card (NVQ Level 2)

- Demolishing non-load-bearing structures
- Removing fixtures and fittings
- Using mechanical hand tools

3. Advanced Demolition Operative (ADO)

Trained: 3-Year Non-Renewable Card

Qualified: 5-Year Renewable Card (NVQ Level 3)

- Working to RAMS
- Using work equipment
- Reading drawings
- Reporting and involvement in hot works

...STEP BY STEP

RIGHT CARD RIGHT JOB!

4. Demolition Chargehand

Trained: 3-Year Non-Renewable Card

Qualified: 5-Year Renewable Card (NVQ Level 3)

- Leading teams of operatives
- Controlling specific demolition tasks
- Reporting to supervisors
- Ensuring safe, efficient delivery

5. Demolition Supervisor

Trained: 3-Year Non-Renewable Card

Qualified: 5-Year Renewable Card (NVQ Level 4)

- Implementing and reviewing RAMS
- Planning daily demolition activities
- Coordinating teams
- Ensuring communication and safety compliance

6. Demolition Manager

Trained: 3-Year Non-Renewable Card

Qualified: 5-Year Renewable Card (NVQ Level 6)

- Managing site demolition operations
- Supporting planning and logistics
- Ensuring work is carried out safely and on programme

7. Demolition Contracts Manager

Trained: 3-Year Non-Renewable Card

Qualified: 5-Year Renewable Card (NVQ Level 7)

- Full responsibility for demolition projects
- Preparing, reviewing and implementing RAMS
- Liaising with clients and third parties
- Managing safety, quality, time and cost

USEFUL NUMBERS

Quick Reference Summary

Keep these contacts saved in your phone. They are here to help you stay safe, supported, and informed.

Training & Competence Support

National Demolition Training Group

Telephone
01442 217144 (Option 2)

Website
demolition.training

Email
hello@ndtg.training

NOCN CPCS

Telephone
0300 999 1177 (Option 1)

Email
cpcs@nocn.org.uk

Website
cpcs.nocn.org.uk/

Health, Safety & Industry

CITB Health & Safety Test (Pearson Vue) Centre

Telephone
0344 994 4488

Website
citb.co.uk

Health and Safety Executive

HSE Infoline
0300 003 1647

National Federation of Demolition Contractors

Telephone
01442 217144 (Option 1)

Website
demolition-nfdc.com

Email
info@demolition-nfdc.com

Mental Health Support

Samaritans

Telephone
116 123

Construction Industry Helpline

Telephone
0345 605 1956

Lighthouse Charity

Telephone
0345 609 1956

Website
lighthousecharity.org/contact-us/

Email
supportservices@lighthousecharity.org

Mind

Telephone
0300 123 3393

Crisis Textline

Text
HARDHAT to 85258

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BE SAFE.

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