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CONSTRUCTION AND FIELD SAFETY READINESS CHECKLIST

A practical guide to assessing site conditions, equipment, workers and emergency arrangements before construction and field activities begin.

Prepared by **Astute Business Consult**

Introduction

Construction and field activities expose workers to hazards that may change from one task, location or stage of a project to another.

A construction site may involve working at height, moving vehicles, electrical installations, excavation, lifting operations and the use of heavy equipment. Field teams may also work in remote locations, unfamiliar environments or areas with limited access to emergency services.

These conditions require more than general safety rules. Your business needs to know whether workers understand their responsibilities, equipment is suitable for the job, work areas are properly prepared and emergency arrangements are available.

This checklist will help you assess those arrangements before work begins and while activities are ongoing.

It covers the practical areas that influence construction and field safety readiness. You can use it during project mobilisation, pre-work inspections, routine site checks and internal safety reviews.

The checklist is designed to help you identify gaps and take action. It is not a substitute for a competent site inspection, task-specific risk assessment or formal safety audit.

PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING CONSTRUCTION AND FIELD SAFETY

What is construction and field safety readiness?

Construction and field safety readiness refers to the level of preparation required to carry out work without exposing employees, contractors, visitors or members of the public to uncontrolled health and safety risks.

It involves checking whether:

- The work has been properly planned.
- Hazards have been identified and assessed.
- Workers have the right training and supervision.
- Tools, machinery and equipment are suitable and safe.
- Work areas are prepared and controlled.
- Personal protective equipment is available and appropriate.
- Emergency arrangements are in place.
- Contractors and other parties understand their safety responsibilities.

Readiness is not a one-time exercise. Conditions can change as work progresses. A new activity, equipment failure, weather change or change in site conditions may require another assessment.

Key terms you should understand

Hazard: Anything with the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage. Examples include exposed electrical cables, unstable ground, moving machinery and falling objects.

Risk: The possibility that a hazard will cause harm, considered alongside the seriousness of the possible consequences.

Risk assessment: A process of identifying hazards, evaluating the risks they create and deciding what controls are needed.

Control measures: Actions taken to eliminate hazards or reduce risks. Examples include physical barriers, safe work procedures, equipment safeguards and suitable protective equipment.

Permit to work: A formal authorisation process used to control specific high-risk activities. It confirms that required precautions have been checked before work starts.

Near miss: An unplanned event that did not cause injury or damage but could have done so.

Competent person: Someone with the necessary training, knowledge, experience or skills to perform a particular task or responsibility safely.

Emergency preparedness: The arrangements a business makes to respond to foreseeable emergencies, including injuries, fires, equipment incidents and other serious events.

Who should use this checklist?

This checklist is suitable for:

- Construction companies and building contractors.
- Civil engineering and infrastructure project teams.
- Facilities management and maintenance companies.
- Engineering and technical service providers.
- Oil, gas and energy contractors.
- Telecommunications installation and maintenance teams.
- Businesses whose employees regularly work at client sites or other field locations.

Business owners, project managers, site supervisors, HSE personnel and operations managers can use it to review safety arrangements.

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PART TWO: HOW TO USE THE CHECKLIST

Review each question and select the response that best describes the current situation.

Response	Meaning
Yes	The requirement is in place and there is evidence to support it.
Partly	Some arrangements exist, but they are incomplete or inconsistently applied.
No	The requirement is not in place.
N/A	The requirement does not apply to the work being assessed.

Do not select Yes simply because a policy or procedure exists. Check whether workers follow it and whether the arrangement works in practice.

Where possible, record the evidence you reviewed. This may include inspection records, training certificates, equipment maintenance reports, permits, risk assessments and site photographs.

Important: If a serious hazard is present, do not wait until you complete the entire checklist before taking action. Stop or restrict the affected activity where necessary and involve the responsible competent person.

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PART THREE: CONSTRUCTION AND FIELD SAFETY READINESS ASSESSMENT

1. Project Planning and Safety Responsibilities

Before work begins, everyone involved should understand the scope of work, the hazards involved and who is responsible for managing them.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Has the scope and sequence of work been clearly defined?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have safety responsibilities been assigned to relevant managers and supervisors?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Has a competent person been assigned to oversee site safety?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have project-specific health and safety requirements been communicated to the team?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have workers and contractors received a site induction before starting work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are safety meetings or briefings conducted before relevant work activities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are changes to work plans reviewed for their safety implications?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are arrangements in place to coordinate the activities of different teams working on the same site?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Project safety plans, site induction records, organisational responsibilities, toolbox talk records and meeting minutes.

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2. Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

Different construction and field activities create different hazards. Your business should assess the risks before work begins and review them when conditions change.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Have hazards associated with the planned activities been identified?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have task-specific risk assessments been completed?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have risks to employees, contractors, visitors and the public been considered?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have risks associated with working at height been assessed where relevant?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have excavation, confined space and lifting risks been assessed where relevant?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have electrical, mechanical and vehicle movement hazards been considered?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have environmental conditions such as rain, heat, wind and poor visibility been considered?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are risk assessments reviewed when the work, equipment or site conditions change?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Risk assessments, job safety analyses, method statements, site inspection reports and records of revised assessments.

3. Site Access and Physical Conditions

A work area should be prepared before employees and contractors begin their activities. Poor site conditions can create risks even when workers have received the right training.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Is access to the work area controlled?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are unauthorised persons prevented from entering hazardous areas?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are walkways and work areas free from unnecessary obstructions?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are excavations, openings and other dangerous areas properly protected?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are warning signs and safety notices displayed where required?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are adequate lighting and visibility available for the work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are materials stored safely without obstructing access routes?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are suitable welfare facilities available to workers?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are housekeeping arrangements in place to manage waste, spills and debris?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Site inspection records, access control arrangements, photographs, housekeeping records and site layout plans.

4. Tools, Machinery and Equipment

Defective or unsuitable equipment can cause serious incidents. Equipment should be suitable for the task, properly maintained and checked before use.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Is equipment suitable for the work being performed?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are pre-use checks conducted where required?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Are defective tools and equipment removed from service?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are machinery guards and safety devices installed and maintained?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are equipment maintenance and inspection records available?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are only authorised and competent persons allowed to operate machinery?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are lifting equipment and accessories inspected as required?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are tools and equipment stored securely when not in use?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are procedures available for isolating equipment before maintenance or repair?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Equipment registers, maintenance records, inspection reports, operator authorisations and pre-use checklists.

5. Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) helps protect workers from hazards that cannot be adequately controlled through other measures. It should be selected based on the risks associated with each task.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Have PPE requirements been identified for each relevant task?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are appropriate safety helmets available where required?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are safety boots suitable for the work and site conditions?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are high-visibility clothing and suitable eye protection available where needed?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Are suitable gloves provided for the hazards involved?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is hearing protection available for activities involving harmful noise exposure?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is suitable respiratory protection provided where exposure risks require it?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are workers trained on the correct use, care and limitations of their PPE?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is damaged or unsuitable PPE replaced?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: PPE issue records, task risk assessments, inspection records and worker observations.

6. Working at Height and Fall Prevention

Falls from height can cause severe injuries or death. Businesses should assess whether work at height can be avoided and establish suitable controls before the activity begins.

Assessment question	**Yes**	**Partly**	**No**	**N/A**
Has the need to work at height been assessed?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are suitable working platforms or access equipment provided?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are ladders and scaffolds inspected before use and as required?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are scaffolds erected, altered and dismantled by competent persons?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are guardrails, edge protection or other suitable fall prevention measures provided?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are fall protection systems used where required?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Are workers trained to use fall protection equipment correctly?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are arrangements available to rescue a worker following a fall or suspension incident?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are tools and materials secured to prevent them from falling onto people below?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Work-at-height risk assessments, scaffold inspection records, equipment checks, training records and rescue arrangements.

7. Excavation, Confined Spaces and High-Risk Activities

Some activities require additional planning, specialist competence and formal authorisation. The controls should match the specific hazards involved.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Are underground services identified before excavation begins?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are excavations assessed for collapse and other ground-related risks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are suitable support, battering or other protective measures provided where necessary?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are safe access and exit arrangements provided for excavations?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are confined spaces identified and assessed before entry?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are atmospheric testing and ventilation arrangements provided where required?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are suitable entry permits and standby arrangements used where necessary?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Are hot work activities assessed and controlled?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are lifting operations planned and supervised by competent persons?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are permits to work used for activities that require formal authorisation?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Excavation permits, underground service drawings, confined space procedures, gas test records, lifting plans and hot work permits.

8. Vehicles, Mobile Equipment and Traffic Management

Construction and field sites may have workers, delivery vehicles, mobile equipment and members of the public moving through the same areas. Their movement should be planned and controlled.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Are vehicle and pedestrian routes clearly identified?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are reversing activities controlled through suitable procedures and assistance where needed?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are vehicle operators trained and authorised?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are vehicles and mobile equipment inspected and maintained?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are speed limits and traffic rules communicated and enforced?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are loading and unloading activities carried out in designated areas where practicable?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are pedestrians protected from moving vehicles and machinery?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are seat belts and other fitted safety devices used?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Are field vehicles suitable for the routes and conditions they will encounter?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Traffic management plans, vehicle inspection records, operator training records and site observations.

9. Worker Competence, Supervision and Communication

Workers need more than general safety awareness. They should understand the risks associated with their specific tasks and know when to stop work or report unsafe conditions.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Have workers received training relevant to their assigned tasks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are operators of specialised equipment properly trained and authorised?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do supervisors have the competence required for their responsibilities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are toolbox talks conducted before relevant activities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do workers understand the hazards and control measures for their tasks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are workers encouraged to report hazards and unsafe conditions?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do workers know how to stop or escalate work when serious safety concerns arise?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are language, literacy and communication needs considered?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Are adequate supervision arrangements available throughout the work period?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Training records, competency assessments, toolbox talk attendance, supervision schedules and worker interviews.

10. Emergency Preparedness and First Aid

An emergency can occur even when preventive measures are in place. Your business should prepare for foreseeable emergencies and ensure workers know how to respond.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Have foreseeable site and field emergencies been identified?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are emergency procedures available and communicated to workers?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are emergency contact numbers displayed or accessible?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are trained first aiders available during work activities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are first aid supplies available and checked regularly?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are suitable fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment available where required?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are emergency exits, access routes and assembly points identified?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are emergency drills conducted where appropriate?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are arrangements in place for transporting injured workers to medical facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are communication arrangements available for remote or isolated field teams?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Are rescue arrangements established for activities such as confined space entry and work at height where relevant?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Emergency response plans, first aid records, drill reports, emergency contact lists and rescue plans.

11. Environmental and Occupational Health Conditions

Safety readiness also involves protecting workers from harmful exposure and conditions that may affect their health during construction and field activities.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Have workers' exposure to dust, fumes and harmful substances been assessed?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are suitable controls available for noise and vibration exposure?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are workers protected from excessive heat and weather exposure?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are drinking water and suitable rest arrangements available?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are hazardous substances labelled and stored safely?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are suitable arrangements available for handling and disposing of hazardous waste?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are sanitation and hygiene facilities available?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are workers' health risks considered when assigning tasks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are measures in place to manage fatigue during long shifts or demanding field work?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Exposure assessments, substance registers, safety data sheets, welfare inspections and work schedules.

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12. Contractor and Subcontractor Management

Construction and field projects often involve several companies working together. Each party should understand its responsibilities and the safety arrangements that apply to the site.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Are contractors assessed for relevant safety competence before engagement?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are contractors informed of site-specific hazards and rules?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are contractor activities coordinated with the main project team?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are contractors required to provide relevant risk assessments and method statements?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are contractor workers included in site inductions and safety briefings?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are contractors monitored to ensure agreed safety requirements are followed?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are unsafe contractor activities addressed promptly?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are subcontractor responsibilities and reporting arrangements clearly defined?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Contractor assessments, contracts, induction records, method statements, inspection reports and coordination meeting records.

13. Incident Reporting and Safety Monitoring

Your business should be able to identify when safety controls are not working. Reporting and reviewing incidents can help prevent similar events from happening again.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Is there a clear process for reporting injuries, incidents and near misses?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do workers know how and where to report safety concerns?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are incidents investigated to identify contributing causes?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are corrective actions assigned to responsible persons?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are corrective actions tracked until completion?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are routine site safety inspections conducted?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are inspection findings documented and reviewed?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are recurring hazards and incidents analysed for patterns?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are safety arrangements reviewed when project activities or conditions change?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to check: Incident registers, investigation reports, corrective action records, inspection reports and safety performance reviews.

PART FOUR: UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESULTS

After completing the checklist, review all responses marked Partly or No.

These responses indicate areas where arrangements may be missing, incomplete or inconsistently applied.

However, not every gap carries the same level of risk. A missing document and an unprotected excavation should not receive the same level of attention.

Use the following categories to prioritise your findings.

Critical priority

A condition that presents an immediate or potentially severe risk of injury or ill health. Examples include an unprotected excavation, unsafe lifting operation or uncontrolled electrical hazard.

Action: Stop or restrict the affected activity where necessary. Arrange immediate intervention by a competent person before work resumes.

High priority

A significant gap that could expose workers to serious harm if it remains unresolved. Examples include inadequate fall protection, missing emergency arrangements or untrained equipment operators.

Action: Assign responsibility and take corrective action before the affected activity proceeds.

Medium priority

A gap that weakens safety arrangements but does not currently present the same level of immediate danger as critical or high-priority findings.

Action: Set a reasonable completion date and monitor progress.

Low priority

An improvement opportunity that supports better organisation, communication or documentation without indicating an immediate serious hazard.

Action: Include it in the improvement plan and review it during routine safety monitoring.

Remember: A low-priority administrative gap should not reduce the importance of a serious hazard simply because the hazard has not yet caused an incident.

PART FIVE: CONSTRUCTION AND FIELD SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Use this table to record the gaps identified during your assessment. Assign each action to a responsible person and set a target completion date.

Identified gap	Priority	Corrective action	Responsible person	Target date	Evidence of completion

After assigning actions, review progress regularly. Do not close an item simply because someone has reported that the work is complete. Check the evidence and confirm that the control is working.

PART SIX: BEFORE WORK BEGINS

Use this short readiness review before starting a new project, mobilising a team or beginning a high-risk activity.

Confirm that:

- The work has been planned and the relevant risks assessed.
- Workers understand their tasks and safety responsibilities.
- Site access and work areas are properly controlled.
- Tools, machinery and equipment are suitable and safe.
- Required PPE is available and suitable.
- Relevant permits and authorisations have been approved.

- Emergency arrangements and first aid provisions are available.
- Contractors and subcontractors understand site requirements.
- Supervisors are available to monitor the work.
- Outstanding critical and high-priority safety issues have been addressed.

If any essential control is missing, assess whether the affected activity can safely proceed. Do not allow project schedules or delivery pressures to replace proper safety decisions.

HOW ISO 45001 SUPPORTS CONSTRUCTION AND FIELD SAFETY

ISO 45001 is an international standard for occupational health and safety management systems. It provides a framework businesses can use to identify hazards, manage risks, meet relevant requirements and improve workplace health and safety.

For construction and field-based businesses, this means moving beyond individual site inspections and safety instructions.

It means establishing a consistent system for planning work, assigning responsibilities, consulting workers, managing contractors, monitoring controls and reviewing performance.

A business can use this checklist as one part of its safety assessment process. However, completing the checklist does not establish conformity with ISO 45001 or guarantee that a workplace is safe.

Certification is also not compulsory simply because a business wants to implement an occupational health and safety management system. The important first step is to establish arrangements that work for the organisation and its activities.

For more information, visit the International Organization for Standardization's ISO 45001 overview.

NEED HELP IMPROVING YOUR SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM?

Identifying safety gaps is an important first step. The next step is deciding how to address them, assign responsibilities and monitor progress.

Astute Business Consult helps businesses assess and improve their management systems, including the processes and controls that support workplace health and safety.

If your business needs help reviewing its current arrangements, identifying gaps or preparing for management system implementation, explore our Management System Diagnostic.

Astute Business Consult

Systems first. Standards second. Certification optional. Outcomes central.

IMPORTANT NOTE

This checklist is a general assessment aid. It does not replace a site-specific risk assessment, competent inspection, specialist engineering assessment, legal review or formal audit.

Some activities require additional controls, permits, technical assessments and competent personnel. These should be determined from the actual work, site conditions and applicable legal requirements.

The person completing this checklist should select N/A only where a requirement genuinely does not apply to the work being assessed.