



## **Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015)**

### **Who is a domestic client?**

A domestic client is anyone who has construction work carried out for them that is **not** done in connection with a business - usually work done on their own home or the home of a family member. A client who has construction work carried out for them that **is** done in connection with a business is a [commercial client](#).

### **Is a domestic client important in ensuring construction is carried out in a way that avoids harm?**

Many domestic clients will have little or no skills, knowledge or experience of managing a construction project. This is why CDM 2015 passes the duties of a domestic client to certain other dutyholders. However, a domestic client can still have an important role in making sure that the people they bring in to do the work are capable of doing it in a way that avoids harm to anyone. They can do this by asking simple questions about their track record in managing health and safety risks and allowing sufficient time and money in the agreed contract for the work to be carried out safely.

### **Who do the duties of the domestic client get passed to?**

A domestic client's duties automatically pass to the [contractor](#) (if it is a single contractor project) or the [principal contractor](#) (for projects involving more than one contractor). However, on a project involving more than one contractor, a domestic client can choose to have a written agreement with a [designer](#) (eg architect) they may have engaged with to manage the project, to carry out the domestic client's duties. As well as taking on the client duties, this designer will then be the [principal designer](#) for the project.

### **What skills, knowledge and experience of construction work does a domestic client need to ensure their project is carried out in a way that avoids harm?**

They do not need to have any skills, knowledge or experience of managing construction work. Provided a domestic client makes reasonable enquiries of those they bring in to carry out the work about their awareness of health and safety risks and their track record in managing those risks, they should be able to rely on them to carry out the work in a way that avoids harm.

CDM 2015 makes a distinction between domestic clients and [commercial clients](#), who commission construction work as part of their business.

A domestic client is any individual who has construction work carried out on their home, or the home of a family member, that is **not** done as part of any business. While CDM 2015 places client duties on commercial clients in full, such duties for domestic clients normally pass to:

- the contractor, if it is a single contractor project, who must take on the legal duties of the client in addition to their own as contractor. In practice, this should involve little more than what they normally do in managing health and safety risks
- the principal contractor, for projects with more than one contractor, who must take on the legal duties of the client in addition to their own as principal contractor. If the domestic client has not appointed a principal contractor, the client duties must be carried out by the contractor in control of the construction work

If a domestic client has appointed an architect (or other designer) on a project involving more than one contractor, they can ask them to manage the project and take on the client duties instead of the principal contractor. The designer then takes on the responsibilities of principal designer and must have a written agreement with the domestic client, confirming they have agreed (as principal designer) to take on the client duties as well as their own responsibilities.

Any designer in charge of coordinating and managing a project is assumed to be the principal designer. However, if they do not have a written agreement with the domestic client to confirm they are taking on the client duties, those duties automatically pass to the principal contractor.