



Southern Construction  
Framework

# Health & Safety Annual Report



2022/2023



# Foreword

Welcome to the Southern Construction Framework Health & Safety Report 2022/2023.

SCF was the first construction framework to introduce a Health & Safety Forum which has been operational since 2009. I am grateful for the generosity and professional expertise that the members of the forum bring to the table in order to share best practice and accelerate improvements and development.

This document sets out how the SCF Health & Safety Forum adds value to SCF construction projects, and how we not only keep our workforce and you safe but how we also adapt and stay at the leading edge of health and safety best practice.

Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all people associated with delivering a construction project takes planning, dedication and experience. It is perhaps also an aspect of construction where the bulk of activity is least visible to many project stakeholders – so much goes on behind the scenes, from the selection of appropriate plant and equipment to training and positive intervention in order to create safe sites. Add to this the amount of work that supports the mental health and physical wellbeing of workers and we can be proud that SCF contractors are at the forefront of excellent Health and Safety practice.

I hope this report provides an insight into at least some of the activity that takes place on each and every SCF project.



**Kingsley Clarke**  
Operations Lead

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## SCF Health & Safety Forum

The SCF Health & Safety Forum comprises of a representative from each of the contractors on the framework. The whole group meets formally once a quarter and on an ad hoc basis (sometimes as subgroups) as required to work on particular tasks.

The construction industry is frequently faced with common issues with individual contracting companies responding to that issue; the strength of the SCF Health & Safety Forum is its ability to discuss and respond collectively, where that is appropriate, and to generally share experience and best practice. The group delivers events, sometimes bringing together particular trades to address an issue but more commonly through live sites at appropriate points in the construction programme.



## Compliance

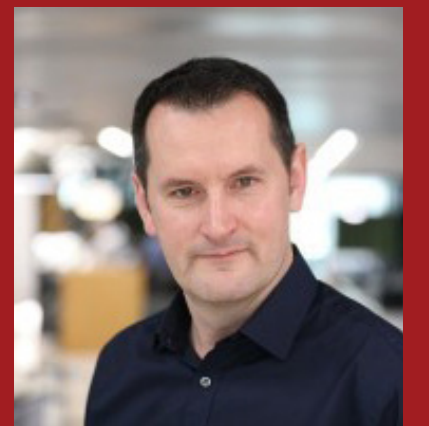
Health and Safety standards in construction are enshrined in UK law and the Health and Safety Executive is the regulatory authority. In addition, there are a number of industry bodies and standards to which principal contractors subscribe.

All construction work on the scale and type procured through SCF is subject to CDM 2015 Regulations. The CDM Regulations have been designed to help prevent injuries and accidents by ensuring that construction work is effectively planned so that risks are managed from the inception and design of a project to the finish when the building is occupied and in use. There is, nevertheless, scope for contractors to achieve the required level of safe practice through the adoption of different strategies and practices appropriate to their business.

It is against this backdrop that the Health & Safety Forum operates and responds to:

- Topical and emerging national initiatives
- Local or specific issues and trends

*“The SCF Health & Safety Forum is almost unique within the construction industry in bringing together senior Health & Safety professionals from Tier One contractors for open, honest and mature discussion about common issues and sharing experiences and mitigations. As a result of this we are able to instigate topical workshops and workstreams across our businesses that target any emerging issues and bring the benefits from this pool of experience and knowledge into all of our businesses.”*



**Mark Mortell**  
Head of Health and Safety  
UK Construction for ISG



# Health and Safety in Practice



## Supporting the Local Supply Chain

SCF Tier One Contractors partner with supply chain companies to deliver their projects and ensure all supply chain partners have the skills and support they require to deliver work safely at both office and site level.

All contractors have rigorous processes and procedures to ensure safety which ranges from the choice and management of equipment, to safe handling of materials, personal conduct and appropriate qualifications.

The mechanisms contractors use to ensure consistent safe practice, include but are not limited to:

- Subcontractor engagement may start as early as pre-order with two stage open book projects.
- Subcontractor engagement during mobilisation and pre-start on site looking at specific competencies.
- Working with sub contractors four to six weeks ahead of programme to instil requirements and responsibilities.
- Daily site briefings (including for package managers) and regular toolbox talks, senior management site tours and other positive interventions
- Involving effective supervisors in the training of others to introduce peer influence.
- Regular sessions for site supervisors and top up sessions explaining roles and responsibilities, behaviours, case studies and scenarios.

## SCF Safer Groundworks 2022 Initiative

Groundworks can be a particularly challenging phase of construction and periodically the Health & Safety Forum has run seminars for the trade and focused on enhanced procedures. Typical dangers include overturning of plant or associated accidents and service strikes.

During 2022, a sub group led by Morgan Sindall and Willmott Dixon pooled knowledge to establish a presentation and learning tool reflecting current best practice and lessons learned, to be used on all SCF sites at the inception of groundworks. Flexibility is built in so that all business-specific procedures may be incorporated.

Morgan Sindall have allowed video footage of real incidents from on-site CCTV to be shared among the contractors for the events; video footage puts across learning points powerfully and it is testament to the trust within the Health & Safety Forum and the joint commitment to work together to improve outcomes.



**Chris Bentley**  
UK SHE Manager  
Morgan Sindall



*Galliford Try delivering the SCF Safer Groundworks Event at the North West Hospital site in Chertsey, Surrey*

# Health and Safety in Practice

## Welfare, Wellbeing and Mental Health



Over recent years, SCF contractors have made a concerted effort in improving mental health awareness training, delivering drop-in sessions and providing wellness checks and workshops in line with national initiatives and HSE guidance. With the construction industry's tight budgets and timelines, 'can do' approach and with people frequently working away from home, working under pressure is the norm.

In the past, SCF has collectively supported The Lighthouse Club, a construction industry specific charity whose work has expanded to help address mental health issues, through a charity bike round and donation of £5,000. SCF has hosted events for the supply chain with a focus on mitigating and managing mental health problems and wellbeing, and these have been well attended. With mental health and wellbeing now firmly established as a topic for continual input, all SCF contractors take a proactive approach and work with a range of mental health organisations including Mind and Mates in Mind.

Wellbeing and welfare activities address topics ranging from promoting a healthy diet, alcohol and drugs awareness and safely working in sunlight to occupational health issues that include protection from dust, vibration and noise. Modern Health & Safety is inextricably linked to good mental health and wellbeing and SCF contractors are all committed to enhancing the wellbeing of their staff, partners and supply chain.

## Working Safely At Height

Working at height is a perennial hazard and all contractors have strict standards around permitted equipment and procedures.

During the spring of 2022, Willmott Dixon arranged for a presentation of VR (virtual reality) training about working at height for the forum members. The immersive video approach is extremely effective (so much so that participants must be seated) in putting across information about safe practice and dangers. An analysis of Willmott Dixon's data following previous VR training about service strikes, including a norming exercise, indicated a reduction of incidents by 43% over a twelve month period. This type of training can also be introduced to client teams, senior staff and those involved in preconstruction to help with safe planning.



Galliford Try have also adopted this approach and have produced VR training about dropped objects; a fictional incident in which the site was not set up properly resulted in a labourer being hit by a dropped spanner in what should have been an exclusion zone. This VR training is aimed primarily at the site operatives carrying out the works. The sessions have been well received; interactive learning reinforces its effectiveness.

Safe working at height was also a focus for Morgan Sindall as part of their annual 'Safe by Action Week'. This involved the roll out of revised guidance on dropped objects, and a number of practical events delivered by equipment suppliers about tool tethering and working at height equipment. Morgan Sindall also delivered virtual events about MEWP (mobile elevating work platform) safety and fall arrest equipment which were attended by staff and supply chain members at all projects.





# Health and Safety in Practice

## Positive Intervention Data



Increasingly, Health & Safety professionals say that a safe site is better measured by the positive interventions that they can introduce rather than measuring a live site by the fact that it may not have suffered an accident or serious incident – to that point; it is no measure that an incident will not occur later. To that end contractors deliver a range of activities, some standard and some less so, throughout the lifetime of a project.

During 2021 SCF Contractors agreed to collect a range of positive intervention data, most of which is common across their businesses so that there is an understanding of what is involved, an opportunity to build on common practices, and an opportunity to share information about their activities to the wider benefit. 2022 is the first complete year for which there is positive intervention data, and we are pleased to share this with SCF clients and stakeholders.



### 35 Innovations and Campaigns

Contractors introduce new systems, procedures and campaigns covering topical health & safety issues across their businesses.

### 16 CLOCS visits and audits

Contractors instigate a CLOCS assessment visit to an agreed proportion of sites.

### 34 Mental Health campaigns and training

Contractors deliver awareness raising, training and signposting to help mitigate and prevent serious mental health issues.

### 150 Recognition awards to operatives

Contractors reward individuals for excellent working practices or problem solving leading to enhanced safety and positive influence among peers.

### 1,924 Toolbox Talks

A toolbox talk is a short presentation to the workforce on a single aspect of health and safety during part of the working day.

### 32 Safety Stand Down

A safety stand down occurs when operation is paused across an entire site.

### 92 Senior Management Site Tours

Senior management site tours motivate and educate staff from all levels and roles about safe and healthy working practice.



# Focus on CLOCS

CLOCS is a national standard aimed at fleet operators, contractors, clients and regulators for ensuring the safest possible construction vehicle journeys. SCF contractors agreed that all projects tendered and won after January 2020 were to be CLOCS (Construction Logistics and Community Safety) registered and CLOCS principles applied in a bid to safeguard road users potentially affected by construction projects. CLOCS started in London in response to high incidence of injuries and fatalities among cyclists and pedestrians involving construction related traffic on its way to and from sites. Outside of London, it is rarely mandated by planning authorities, so uptake has been slower. However, during the last two years, SCF has been instrumental in helping the scheme spread to the wider country, and is poised to consolidate and develop CLOCS related activity during SCF5.



## Managing Construction Traffic Safely - How ISG introduced the CLOCS standard to its SCF sites

Chris Bartlett, ISG Project Manager was appointed CLOCS champion, and began to work with supply chain partners to influence the use of FORS accredited logistic companies. The first project to implement CLOCS was North Devon Enterprise Centre EU funded project in Barnstable, North Devon.



A comprehensive construction logistics plan was developed which was supported by a thorough driver induction programme and a bespoke database to log and track CLOCS self-certificate forms/deliveries/FORS status and vehicle inspections.

The lessons learned on the NDEC project were understood and implemented on other projects, with CLOCS audit scores improving with each subsequent framework project, and this concluded with the impressive score of 26/27 on the Hawkfield Studios project in Bristol.

## Willmott Dixon and CLOCS

Michelle Gonnella, Senior Health, Safety & Environmental Manager (South) has reported that the mandate SCF introduced for projects to work to the CLOCS standard helped the business focus on delivering the Standard. A committed member of the forum, Michelle said

*"It came to my attention that we'd been 'CLOCS Champions' since 2016 yet we were not really conforming to the standard, and we were not initiating any CLOCS inspections on sites. This was an eye opening experience as at Willmott Dixon we strive for excellence and felt this needed some leadership within our organisation."*



Michelle went on to say that since the forum where adoption of CLOCS was first discussed in 2018, and mandated in 2020, Willmott Dixon has come a long way, with their average CLOCS inspection score now being 88% and having over 61 inspections (business wide) carried out in 2022. Michelle continued...



*"In 2022 alone, we have trained 30 managers to understand CLOCS and 117 gatekeepers to our internal 'Site Access Traffic Marshall' training. We are now proud to say we are CLOCS champions."*



**Andy Brooke**

CLOCS Programme Director

*"A couple of years ago, far too many contractors said they couldn't make CLOCS work outside London without clients helping make it happen."*

*The SCF Health & Safety Forum showed great leadership by driving collective commitment and collaborative action by all large contractors on its framework and the two local authorities (Hampshire and Devon) driving the framework. Working with the CLOCS team to deliver collaborative Construction Logistics Plan training, Site Access Traffic Marshal training and regularly discussing and sharing best practice between those on the framework has been transformational."*

*Almost without exception every contractor is visibly committed and performing at much higher levels than ever before, working together to ensure the safest, greenest and leanest construction vehicle journeys through our communities."*

## Robotic Lifting

Much innovation in the field of health and safety results from applying new technologies to existing issues. What starts as innovation then becomes the norm, especially on larger construction sites. As new construction techniques and trends emerge, new potential dangers may follow, and again innovation is increasingly the route to dealing safely with these.

BAM initially trialled the use of robots to install heavy windows and glass panels, and following the success of this initiative they now mandate the practice of robotic lifting across all sites for loads of over 50kg. This initiative mitigates the risk of injuries due to lifting and manoeuvring large, cumbersome objects.



## Vacuum Extraction

Undertaking groundworks by hand digging or traditional excavators has always been a potentially dangerous activity due to the presence of buried services and the risk of a strike to power cables, or gas pipes with potentially fatal results to operatives.

Vacuum excavation uses high pressure air or water to break up the ground, and then the loosened soil and debris is safely removed with a vacuum. The process is far less likely to cause damage to services than traditional methods. Vacuum excavation has been in use for some decades but has been refined to suit the needs of building construction.



**Richard Russell, SHE Advisor for Wates Construction South West said:**

*“Initially, vacuum extraction was infrequently used and very expensive but is now an everyday occurrence on Wates sites and is preferred due to the enhanced protection it provides to operatives and the site.”*

The forum’s strength lies in the drawing together of the framework contractors’ expertise and this year’s report reflects input to the forum from BAM, Galliford Try, ISG, Kier, Mace, Morgan Sindall, Sir Robert McAlpine, Wates and Willmott Dixon.

With the fifth generation of SCF launched in 2023 we welcome additional members to the group - Bowmer and Kirkland, Bouygues-UK, Graham, Tilbury Douglas and Vinci. We look forward to their contribution in developing the SCF Health & Safety Forum as it moves forward to address common issues and share the best practice SCF contractors have always delivered. While some health & safety concerns are perennial, and dealt with on a continuing basis,

others emerge as a result of changes within the industry whether that is as a consequence of new techniques and innovations, or matters affecting the workforce. Technology will continue to drive many of the solutions. Whatever the challenges for 2023, the Health & Safety Forum will ensure that SCF remains influential in sharing, delivering and innovating best practice.

## Supporting Documentation

The SCF Health & Safety Forum has developed a charter to reflect the common elements of its work and to which all SCF contractors have agreed to abide by. From time to time the charter is updated reflecting changes in industry wide standards and practices as well as new forum activities or targets.

[View SCF Charter](#)

