



INFORMATION SHEET: FOCUS ON COMPLIANCE

Construction site security: Unauthorised access

Background

Regulation 298 of the Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 (WHS General Regulations) requires a person with management or control of a workplace where construction work is carried out to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the workplace is secured from unauthorised access.

When people enter construction sites they may be exposed to hazards that can cause fatalities or serious injuries.

In addition, a person with management or control of a scaffold at a workplace must ensure unauthorised access to the scaffold is prevented while the scaffold is incomplete or unattended (WHS General Regulations, r. 225(5)).

This ensures that members of the public, including children, are not exposed to risks arising from the construction work. The regulation is not prescriptive because different sites and locations have different risks, so the most appropriate controls should be chosen for the site.

In assessing the risk, the person with management and control of the construction site must consider:

- the risks to the health and safety of an unauthorised person
- how likely unauthorised access is. For example, a site near a place used by children (such as a school, park or shop) requires additional security controls
- how hazards at the workplace will be isolated in case unauthorised access is not prevented.

The hazards and risks at construction sites can change during the stages of work and include:

- excavations
- slips, trips and falls, including falls from height
- temporary electrical installations
- partially constructed structures
- stored construction materials
- plant and equipment.

Actions required

Security fencing may discourage unauthorised visitors, including children, on a construction site. Members of the public may not be deterred by warning signs, have no awareness of the hazards and risks they may be exposed to once on the site.

If a risk assessment identifies that security fencing is required, it must be adequate to prevent unauthorised access, and:

- be high enough to deter entry
- be difficult to climb
- be difficult to crawl under
- be able to withstand anticipated loads, such as wind forces and persons attempting to scale
- where a fence consists of discrete panels, the joints should not weaken it and should provide the same level of security as the panels
- gates should not represent a weak point and the closed gate should provide the same level of security as the fence.

Existing boundary fences are acceptable if they prevent access to the construction site.

PCBUs, including subcontractors, should ensure their workers secure the site or their work area before leaving the site, especially if hazards are present. While construction work is being carried out and people are on site, a fence may be left unlocked or incomplete to ensure safe entry and exit.

In some locations hoarding, a substantial and fully sheeted fence or screen, may be necessary to reduce the risk of injury to people near the construction site.

Where it is not practicable to secure the construction site, the person with management and control of the construction site must isolate hazards within the workplace. For example, by securing or isolating any open excavation if there is a risk of anyone falling into it, securing access into a house under construction or removing all access onto an erected scaffold or hoist.

Further information

WorkSafe, Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety

- [*Code of practice: Construction work*](#)
- [*Code of practice: Demolition work*](#)
- [*Code of practice: Managing risks of plant in the workplace*](#)

Building and Energy, Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety

- [Signage](#)