



Stewardship & Management Workgroup

of The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers



THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH
BELL RINGERS

Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015)

How these apply to Bells Projects

Introduction

Anyone involved in a project to repair, maintain or restore a bell installation as a legal duty to ensure proportionate compliance with Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015). These regulations aim to improve health and safety in a construction project by helping you to:

- sensibly plan the work so the risks involved are managed from start to finish
- have the right people for the right job at the right time
- cooperate and coordinate your work with others
- have the right information about the risks and how they are being managed
- communicate this information effectively to those who need to know
- consult and engage with workers about the risks and how they are being managed

Tower captains or steeple-keepers considering work on bell installations must involve the building owner (normally the incumbent of the church) who is ultimately responsible for compliance with CDM 2015 and for the health and safety of volunteer or contract workers. All work must be supervised, designed, specified and carried out by competent persons and in accordance with insurance policy conditions.

General guidance on health and safety is provided in these notes but organisers of work on bells are encouraged to get expert health and safety advice for specific projects where appropriate.

These notes have been written from the perspective of bells owned by churches in the Church of England. Although probably broadly applicable, this guidance may not be applicable for some towers, for example those that are not in the Church of England, or not in church ownership.

Construction Work

The law says (in summary) that '*construction work*' means the carrying out of any building, civil engineering or engineering construction work and includes - the construction, alteration, conversion, fitting out, commissioning, renovation, repair, upkeep, redecoration or other maintenance (including cleaning which involves the use of water or an abrasive at high pressure, or the use of corrosive or toxic substances), de-commissioning, demolition or dismantling of a structure.

Application of CDM 2015

The Health & Safety Executive requires that, by law, all construction work in or on buildings shall be regulated by CDM 2015.

For any insurance claim for death or injury resulting from negligence or accident during construction work to be successful, the CDM regulations must have been followed where appropriate.

Work on Bell Installations

Any work of renovation repair upkeep redecoration or other maintenance on fixed bell installations is subject to *proportionate* compliance with CDM 2015.

Major projects where bearings, bells or clappers are removed for turning, tuning or annealing off-site, the work must be undertaken by suitably skilled, knowledgeable and experienced contractors commissioned by the building owner.

Minor projects including routine lubrication of bearings, tightening of bolts, replacement of stays, fixing of bell-ropes and the repainting of frames must also comply with CDM 2015 health & safety principles.

The building owner must be fully informed before any project is carried out and must assure themselves that volunteers or contractors are *competent* for the tasks to be performed.

Guidance for Tower Captains, Steeple-Keepers or others involved in Bell Work

It is recommended that tower captains and others involved in construction work on bell installations take action as follows:

1. Confirm that the building owner has assessed any work project and that they, or a 'contractor' (*) has filled in an HSE form CIS80 (see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cis80.pdf>).
2. Ensure that minor works by volunteers are properly risk assessed, organised and supervised by a competent person and carried out safely.
3. Where volunteer 'helpers' are involved in work by others, ensure that the 'contractor' makes all necessary arrangements for their health & safety.
4. Create and keep records of all work for example in a belfry diary or visitors' book.

* Note that the 'contractor' can be a *competent* volunteer

Further information

Summary of CDM 2015:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/summary.htm>

General guidance on CDM 2015:

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/CCB_CDM-Regulations-2015_Sep-2016.pdf

Further advice in relation to church buildings:

<https://churchgrowth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CDM-Regulations-August-2019.pdf>

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