

Buildoffsite Registration Scheme

The Case for the Scheme

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Version 4



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1. The Buildoffsite Registration Scheme

The Buildoffsite Registration Scheme is an evaluation of the control measures established by a service provider to mitigate the risks to the safe and competent provision of offsite activities and services.

The aim of the scheme is to provide confidence to client organisations, end users and insurers of the standardisation of best practice in the provision of offsite services and activities when undertaken by a registered service provider.

1.1 The organisations behind the scheme

Buildoffsite is an industry wide campaigning organisation that promotes greater uptake of offsite techniques within UK construction. To facilitate this aim, Buildoffsite sought to raise the profile of the sector by introducing a registration scheme to underpin confidence in all aspects relating to the quality of the off-site solution.

Lloyd's Register EMEA was chosen to operate the scheme because of the strength and international recognition of the brand and its track record for administering schemes of a similar nature within other industry sectors.

In fulfilling its role, Lloyd's Register may draw upon specialist support as may be necessary from such organisations as the British Board of Agrément, to assist in such issues as competency assessment and design process evaluation

2. About the Scheme

The Buildoffsite Registration Scheme uniquely focuses on process, as distinct from product. The scheme is designed to benchmark offsite construction organisations against best practice in terms of competency, methodology and safety and will serve as a vehicle for the standardisation of best practice across the offsite sector of the construction industry.

Four categories of accreditation are available:

- Design
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Project Management

Although designed for the offsite sector, the scheme has the potential to be applicable to the traditional construction sector. However due to the transient nature of the workforce and limited documented processes, systems and controls, the ability to achieve and demonstrate consistent standards in terms of competency, methodology and Health and Safety, would result in a more protracted and costly route to registration than would typically be the case for the offsite sector.

2.1 Why the scheme has merit

Within the construction industry there is perceived to be a widening gap between the current certification products and the demand of the market for flexibility and rapid change. Equally there is a recognised need for coherency and structure to the various certification routes. The development and application of a risk based accreditation process, focussing on the process of delivery rather than the delivered product/service incorporates the flexibility necessary to enable best practice to evolve continuously, within the bounds of informed risk, to meet changing market needs.

A scheme which focuses on process encapsulates not only all activities from tender submission, through award, specification, design, manufacture, delivery, construction, handover and maintenance, it can also integrate disparate product certification and take account of existing QA system certification such as ISO 9001 and 14001.

The Buildoffsite scheme requires the offsite service provider to define the risks to his business/project/contract, identify the required control measures to mitigate, where appropriate, those risks and ensure that those control measures are cascaded as necessary through the organisation.

The scheme assessment process will evaluate the comprehensiveness of the risk assessments, with particular focus on the risks and associated controls established to achieve and maintain best practice in the safe and competent delivery of the offsite service or product, which conforms to client requirements.

The scheme will act as a cohesive influence from a certification perspective as the offsite service provider may identify the structural integrity of an innovative design as a risk or even more pertinently may not. In either case the scheme would require risk mitigation measures to be

established which, as a minimum, would require independent validation by a recognised competent body such as a certifying body.

The scheme does not require Offsite Service Providers to hold ISO 9000 or ISO 14000 but where such certification exists then a light touch will be exercised where overlaps exist between the focus of the scheme and certified quality system.

2.2 What the scheme will do for the Industry

The scheme requires accredited offsite service providers to formalise a risk process which identifies risks to the business which translate into control measures and which impact on all activities and all personnel.

A risk mitigation measure associated with a new product design or a variation on an existing product/design would be independent design validation. This process will introduce a consistent approach to validation and certification of design, currently lacking within the industry.

The scheme will focus on process which will also incorporate product through the risk mitigation process but will nevertheless provide for process flexibility facilitating controlled change rather than the 'strait jacketed approach' favoured by current construction industry certification processes.

The Buildoffsite Registration Scheme will be the first offsite sector specific scheme that focuses on the safe and competent delivery of service or product. It represents an innovative approach to assessment which will support the more rapid introduction of innovative offsite construction solutions.

Registration under the scheme will be evidence to the market that the registrant is committed to the implementation of best practice in the delivery of products and services to the industry and will therefore represent a powerful marketing tool with international and as well as national recognition.

Traditionally few if any offsite constructors will have implemented a formalised risk process, most risks being evaluated and mitigated on an intuitive basis. The drawback with this process is that the reason for the mitigation measures are rarely effectively communicated throughout the organisation and so rarely receives ownership by the staff and effective implementation may therefore be questionable.

Effective formalised risk assessment and mitigation requires a free flow of upward and downward communication within the accredited offsite service provider's organisation, facilitating improved staff/management relations.

Offsite constructors who are implementing the formalised risk assessment process have realised commercial benefit from its inception.

The accredited offsite Service Provider will receive:

- A Registration Certificate
- A website listing of registered scopes
- A letter head logo

A complete project team, comprising a number of Offsite Service Providers, may be accredited which would provide a valuable edge when engaged in a tender process

2.3 What the scheme will do for clients

The Buildoffsite Registration Scheme website will provide the client organisations with a ready tender list of accredited offsite Service Providers who have standardised best practice within the delivery of their products and services.

The accredited offsite Service Providers will be required to have incorporated configuration management systems which will require them, when operating as part of a project team, to have authorisation and change management systems in place which will ensure that changes and variations are authorised, based upon an informed view of the impact that those changes may have on other interconnecting elements, manufactured by other organisations, as well as the assembled system. The client can therefore be assured that project delays due to onsite interconnecting assembly problems will be obviated.

In summary the value to client and wider stakeholder interests in contracting to accredited offsite service Providers is the overall reduction in risk associated with the integrity of the product/ service, to project schedules and cost.

3. Relationship between the Buildoffsite Scheme and other product and service certification schemes

3.1 Construction Product Certification

The principal difference between the Buildoffsite Scheme and other construction product certification schemes is that it is a broad risk based process assessment with inherent flexibility to accommodate the rapid change demanded by market needs. It is an overarching certification process which draws together existing certification routes. The processes captured within the scheme include award, specification, design, manufacture, delivery, construction, handover and maintenance, ensuring a competent, consistent and safe delivery of each stage and a product which meets the client's requirements.

Essentially the scheme is process rather than product based, designed to deliver competence, safety and continuous improvement, with the objective of limiting risks to projects through a focus on customer requirements.

3.2 ISO 9000

ISO 9000 is a model generic framework of documented quality systems, compliance with which represents a demonstration of organisational competence. The Buildoffsite scheme registration represents the achievement of technical and safety standards which reflect best practice within the industry when undertaking the scope of work for which accreditation has been awarded.

In the context of the Buildoffsite scheme, ISO 9000 registration represents the starting point, however in the limited circumstances where the focus of the scheme overlaps with ISO 9000 certified systems, a light touch is adopted by the scheme assessors to limit duplication of effort.

Some of the key differences of the scheme relative to ISO 9000:2000 are as follows:

The scheme:

- is industry sector specific
- is process based focussing on competency, methodology and H&S
- benchmarks good practice
- takes ownership of performance
- is prepared to withdraw registration
- is accountable to industry sector overseeing body for performance
- is risk based evaluation process
- incorporates configuration management