

Buildoffsite Registration Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is 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.

2. Which organisations are behind the scheme?

The scheme has been developed by Lloyd's Register EMEA (LR) to meet the needs of the Buildoffsite Service Providers.

LR will operate the scheme in collaboration with other organisations which may provide specialist support such as the British Board of Agrément (BBA).

Buildoffsite which 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.

Lloyd's Register EMEA is a global safety and risk management organisation and 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.

Technical support will be provided as may be necessary from the industry acknowledged experts such as the British Board of Agrément, who may be called upon to provide assessment support in the evaluation of technical competence.

3. Why is the scheme needed?

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.

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, not only embraces and integrates existing certification schemes but also incorporates the flexibility necessary to enable best practice to evolve continuously, within the bounds of informed risk, to meet changing market needs.

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.

4. What does the scheme cover?

The scheme focuses on process and covers all of the activities from tender submission, through award, specification, design, manufacture, delivery, construction, handover and maintenance. It also integrates disparate product certification and takes account of existing QA system certification such as ISO 9001 and 14001.

By focussing on the process of delivery, rather than the delivered product/service, the scheme has the flexibility to enable the accredited offsite service provider to adapt, within the limits of informed risk, their service provision and product, to meet changing market needs.

5. The scheme focuses on risk, how does that differ from what I already do?

The scheme requires accredited offsite service providers to formalise a risk identification and evaluation process which identifies risks to the business and to translate these into control measures which impact on all activities and all personnel. Few offsite constructors have implemented such a formalised risk process and most constructors currently evaluate and mitigated risks on an intuitive basis. This often results in the reason for the mitigation measures being poorly communicated throughout the organisation which can cause the mitigation measures to not be owned by those doing the activity. Hence recognising service providers whose procedures focus on effective management of risk provides benefits to them as a business and gives greater certainty over deliverables to their clients.

To gain Buildoffsite accreditation you need to establish and maintain procedures for the ongoing identification, assessment and mitigation of business and contract/project risks through all the stages from design and manufacturing through to construction. You then need to ensure that the results of your assessments and associated controls measures are considered and provide input into your business and project specific processes.

You do not, however, need to have a fully integrated risk process in place to gain accreditation under the scheme. We will assess your current systems against a framework of risk mitigation measures and once you have addressed any gaps we will certify you on the basis that you develop an integrated risk management process within agreed timescales – normally within 18 months of certification.

6. What will I, as a Service Provider, gain from the accreditation process?

The Buildoffsite Registration Scheme is the first offsite sector specific scheme that focuses on the safe and competent delivery of service or product. Effective management of risk is an important business consideration in a tight construction programme and offsite constructors who are implementing the formalised risk assessment process have realised commercial benefit from its inception.

The scheme requires you to formalise a risk process. This enables you to better identify risks to your business and identify the control measures needed to safeguard against these risks which impact on your activities and personnel. An effective formalised risk assessment and mitigation requires a free flow of upward and downward communication within your business this will facilitate improved staff/management relations.

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

7. How does the scheme help Buildoffsite clients?

The list of accredited service providers, available on the Buildoffsite Registration Scheme website, provides client organisations with a ready tender list of offsite service providers who have standardised best practice for the delivery of their products and services.

The value to clients, 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 (covering both units assembled by the service provider and items they procure) also to project schedules and cost.

The scheme takes ownership of the performance of accredited service providers and will investigate complaints from clients where there is a perceived shortfall in the quality of the service provision. A report will be issued to the client and to the service provider and lessons learned will be required to be implemented by both the service provider, the scheme operator and as may be applicable, the client.

8. What categories of accreditation are available?

Four categories of accreditation are available, these are:

- Design
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Project Management

9. Under what circumstances would the project management scope of accreditation be required?

The project management scope is required for service providers who do not have the facilities or capabilities to perform design, manufacture or construction themselves but wish to act as the main contractor and subcontract the services to accredited subcontractors. Under these circumstances the project manager would be assessed as having the competence to oversee the subcontracted activities and to act as an 'informed buyer'

10. Do Service Providers need to hold ISO accreditation?

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

11. What is the cost of the accreditation?

The accreditation assessment process will be undertaken in stages. The first stage will be the gap analysis, this represents a set fee of £2,600 exclusive of expenses (subject to price review June of each year). The gap analysis is a high level review of your processes and competency systems. A detailed report of the findings of the analysis will be issued and the level of familiarity with your business provided by the gap exercise, together with the extent and nature of the gaps, will enable a cost to be developed for the full implementation audit, leading to certification. As a rule of thumb, provided you address the gaps and issues identified, in a timely manner, which does not necessitate additional visits over and above those included in the proposal for the full implementation audit, then a figure circa £10,000 for the full accreditation process may be considered reasonable for the scope of design, manufacture and construction, for an offsite provider with up to 150 staff.

12. How long does the accreditation take?

This will vary dependant on the scope of accreditation requested. The time our Assessors will spend with you could typically be anything between 5 and 10 man days. If everything is in place then a report will be produced within 2 weeks of the visit. If there are deficiencies which need to be addressed then this will prolong the assessment process. In general for a medium size company, the whole process, from application to approval, can take up to 6 months.

13. How do you apply for accreditation?

By visiting the Lloyds Register EMEA Buildoffsite website at www.lloydsregister.co.uk you will find an application form which can be downloaded and e-mailed to the Utilities Team (contact details are on the website). Any other queries should be directed to the same team.

14. Are there any guidance notes available?

Yes there are guidance notes available for the Buildoffsite Scheme. You will find them on the Buildoffsite website at www.lloydsregister.co.uk

15. What happens after I have agreed the quotation?

Once you have accepted the quote and returned the signed Request for Services Form, an assessor will be nominated for your company. The assessor will contact you and agree the dates for the gap analysis. Please note, that no payment is required at this stage unless after a financial check your credit limit is below the quoted amount

16. Does Lloyds Register EMEA provide any consultation services to assist in compiling the Buildoffsite procedures?

Lloyd's Register is unable to assist you in the development of systems and procedures. However, as part of the assessment process, we perform a gap analysis which will identify to you the aspects of your practices and procedures which require development/refinement before you are ready for a full assessment.

17. What will the Lloyd's Register Assessor be looking for during the assessment?

The Assessor will structure an agenda with you before the visit. This will cover the scope of your accreditation and activities you perform.

The assessment will typically cover:

- how you recruit people, train them and assess their competence
- how you control documentation and data and make information known to those involved in the process
- what you record and how your records are kept
- how you identify, assess and control risks
- your configuration management arrangements
- how you control work through the design, manufacturing, storage, transportation and construction stages
- how safety, health and environmental issues are managed
- the audit and quality checks you do and how these relate to identified risks

18. What happens after I have gained full accreditation?

Your company's name and scope of registration will be entered onto the Buildoffsite website at www.lloydsregister.co.uk which may be used by clients as a tender list. You will also receive a Certificate listing your scope of approval and you will be entitled to use the Buildoffsite scheme logo on your letterheads etc.

19. How long does accreditation last for?

Accreditation lasts for three years subject to the satisfactory completion of surveillance audits by your Lloyd's Register assessor. The number of surveillance visits you will receive is dependent on the number of staff involved with Buildoffsite activities and your scope of works. Most Buildoffsite service providers have 3/4 surveillance visits a year, although a small company just undertaking, say, design may only have one.

20. Can I use subcontractors to carry out the works?

You can use subcontractors provided you are able to demonstrate appropriate influence and control over their competencies and methods of working. In the event that a subcontractor is providing technical support in the delivery of an accredited scope of work then their competencies and methodologies should reflect those against which you were assessed and accredited. In time, as the scheme gains wider acceptance, all principal subcontractors will need to become accredited in their own right.

Depending on the roles for which you use subcontractors we may reserve the right to evaluate your declared principal subcontractors and suppliers whilst we are carrying out the implementation audit but this would be identified to you at the gap analysis stage.

21. Can the scheme be applied to the traditional construction sector?

Although designed for the offsite sector, the scheme could 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 H&S, would result in a more protracted and costly route to registration than would typically be the case for the offsite sector.

22. What happens if I fail to comply with scheme terms of registration once accredited?

If, during a surveillance visit, the Assessor notes a deficiency they will discuss this with you. If it is a major deficiency (see guideline notes for definitions) then you will have one month to take appropriate corrective actions. If you fail to take action then your accreditation will be suspended.

If the assessment identifies a minor deficiency then you will have until the next surveillance visit to take corrective action and this will be verified by your assessor at that time. If by the next visit you have not taken any action to close out a minor deficiency, then you will be issued with a Major Deficiency.

23. What recourse to appeal do I have if I do not accept a judgement of the scheme operator?

If you do not agree with any of the findings that your assessor has highlighted to you then you can appeal against the decision to the Buildoffsite Scheme Advisory Panel. The full appeals process is shown in the Scheme guidance document.

24. Can anyone involved in the Offsite construction sector apply?

Yes any service provider operating within the offsite construction sector may apply – manufacturers, suppliers, main contractors and specialist subcontractors together with logistics specialists, provided they are Buildoffsite members or commit to becoming members within 18 months of accreditation.

25. Does the scheme require me to establish integrated H&S systems?

Yes you would be assessed to ensure that you have a fully integrated H&S system and that you complied with the CDM regs.

26. If I gain accreditation under the scheme do I need Third Party Product certification?

The scheme will require you to identify the means by which you evaluate and mitigate risk associated with new designs or changes in design. You will need to nominate a competent person who may be a staff member or a consultant of appropriate competence who will need to evaluate and sign off all such risks as mitigated and he may perform this activity by either returning to the certification body, who may have type approved the original design, for their review and approval of the change, or approach an appropriate engineering consultant or evaluate and assess the risk himself, but in all cases the evaluation must be fully documented. The methods applied to the risk evaluation process will be reviewed to ensure validity, similarly the competence of the risk evaluator will be assessed to ensure that his competencies are appropriate to the tasks performed.