



**Temporary Works  
forum**

Promoting best practice in  
the construction industry.

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## **TWf INFORMATION SHEET No. 12**

### **Competence of the Designated Individual (DI)**

#### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 BS 5975: 2019, Section<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>, sets out recognised industry good practice for the procedural control of temporary works. The designated individual (DI) is the senior person within an organisation with responsibility for establishing, implementing and maintaining a procedure for the control of temporary works for that organisation.
- 1.2 The law<sup>2</sup> requires those working on a project to have the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out the work in a way that secures health and safety. The designated individual is no exception to this, in so far as the DI should be competent to undertake the role in an appropriate manner.  
  
NOTE: The DI is not a function required in CDM2015 but is one that is key in the delivery of safe construction work, in particular temporary works (as required by CDM2015).
- 1.3 There is no definitive means to assess or prescribe individual competency. This Information Sheet aims to provide guidance on this subject. Regardless of any such guidance, however, determining the competency of an individual is ultimately a matter of judgement on the part of the organisation's senior leadership team, for example the board, chairman, health and safety director.
- 1.4 Most importantly, an individual accepting the role of DI must be certain in their own competence to fulfil and action the duties set out; and have the support of the Board of Directors.

#### **2.0 BS 5975: 2019**

- 2.1 BS 5975: 2019, Clause 3.19, provides this definition:

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<sup>1</sup> BS 5975:2019, Code of practice for temporary works procedures and the permissible stress design of falsework

<sup>2</sup> For example, the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015



### **3.19 designated individual (DI)**

*senior person within an organisation with responsibility for establishing, implementing and maintaining a procedure for the control of temporary works for that organisation*

2.2 The standard recommends (Clause 6.1.2.1) that:

*All organizations which are party to a contract or otherwise involved in a project which has a requirement for temporary works are involved in temporary works ... and should appoint a designated individual (DI). The DI should be either a member of or directly responsible to a member of the organization's main supervisory board (of directors) and should have both responsibility and authority for establishing and maintaining a procedure to control those aspects of temporary works (and associated risks) for which the organizations have responsibility or which they can constrain or influence. The temporary works procedure should be approved by the main board or a main board director.*

NOTE The DI should ensure that the procedure is approved. Ultimately, the board takes ultimate responsibility for the procedure.

## **3.0 Role of the DI**

3.1 BS 5975: 2008, Clause 6.3.1, introduced the role of the designated individual in *“every organization involved in temporary works”* (indicating that such organisations were those that *“typically could have an involvement in temporary works include: clients, management contractors, contractors, sub-contractors, suppliers, and consultants”*).

3.2 The recommendations in BS 5975: 2019, Clause 6.1.1.1, are more explicit:

*“When a project has, or might be anticipated to have, the requirement for any temporary works, the organizations listed in 6.1.1.2 should have and implement a procedure which outlines how that organization is to discharge its duties in relation to the temporary works. ...”*

with BS 5975: 2019, Clause 6.1.1.2, stating:

*“The following organizations should have procedures covering roles, responsibilities and appointments, all with the intention of removing ambiguity and making the PC's overall responsibilities clear. (Domestic clients are a special case ... ):*

- a) Clients.*
- b) Management/cost consultants (this includes architects acting for a client).*
- c) Contractors/sub-contractors/specialist contractors (including demolition contractors) all of which manage their own temporary*



*works. This includes third-party employed contractors, such as utility providers and their contractors.*

- d) temporary works designers and permanent works designers.*
- e) Manufacturers/suppliers.*

*NOTE Some organizations have multiple responsibilities, e.g. utility providers, management contractors.*

- 3.3 To assess competencies one must consider the intended purpose and role of the DI; two clauses in BS 5975: 2019 are of particular relevance:

Clause 6.1.2.2

*“The DI should be responsible for ensuring that any organizations that they employ or recommend to be employed have adequate temporary works procedures if they are designing, carrying out and/or managing temporary works.”*

and

Clause 6.1.3.3

*“Each organization should determine the level of control for each risk class of temporary works, depending on their experience (including that of operatives), competence and the location of the particular temporary works and the consequence of its failure. The approach to be taken when managing risk under each of the implementation classes should be defined in the company procedures. ...”*

- 3.4 The role of the DI will differ, depending on the type of organisation. A client’s DI will have different responsibilities to a contractor’s DI; who will have different responsibilities to a designer’s DI.
- 3.5 There are, however, similarities and this Information Sheet considers the overarching role of a DI; regardless of organisation and company procedures (which should be written specifically to identify individual and organisational responsibilities of all those involved in the safe management of temporary works).

## 4.0 Competence

### 4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 Although it is necessary to consider both ‘corporate’ and ‘individual’ competence, this Information Sheet concentrates on the latter. It is a company’s responsibility to train, equip, brief and supervise its



employees in accordance with the law<sup>3</sup>; and this includes an assessment by an organisation's senior management on who is competent to manage temporary works on their behalf.

4.1.2 All organisations involved in temporary works, including clients and others, should select and use only competent organisations.

4.1.3 A competent person/organisation is defined in BS 5975: 2019, Clause 3.13, as:

*“person/organization with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience (and organizational capability) of the specific tasks to be undertaken and the risks which the work entails, to enable them to carry out their duties in relation to the project, to recognize their limitations, and to take appropriate action in order to prevent harm to those carrying out construction work, or those affected by the work”<sup>4</sup>*

4.1.4 Competency is achieved through both formal training and practical experience relevant to the industry sector being worked in.

## 4.2 Formal training

4.2.1 It is recommended that as a minimum the training requirement for any DI should be the successful completion of a recognized temporary works coordinator course.

NOTE: This may not be the case in a one-off client but some awareness training in the importance and significance of temporary works is nonetheless recommended.

## 4.3 Practical experience

4.3.1 The DI should have sufficient experience of construction and technical expertise in the type of work being undertaken by their organisation. Technical expertise is beneficial in both design (ideally, temporary works design) and construction (execution).

NOTE: The Client may have no construction expertise. It is, nevertheless, important that the Client's DI ensures that any organisations that they employ - or recommend being employed - have adequate temporary works procedures. The client's DI should ensure that any procedure for the control of temporary works, e.g. those of the PD and PC, are being implemented. Implementation can be checked either by using the client's own staff during the contract, by using a competent third-party audit and/or certification scheme. See BS 5975: 2019, Clause 7.3.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)

<sup>4</sup> A person may require delegated authority from his employer to carry out a certain function or duty



4.3.2 The DI should be either a member of or directly responsible to a member of the organisation's main supervisory board (of directors). They may, for example, be a technical director or chief engineer (or, where these roles do not exist, an equivalent level of experience and role equivalence) or the director responsible for health and safety (or person of equivalent seniority with experience in the management of temporary works).

NOTE: Where an organisation has several operating divisions they may consider having a DI in each of these divisions, each maintaining a clear reporting route to an individual at board level. It is important that a consistent approach is maintained across the company.

4.3.3 The DI must have sufficient resource (including time) to undertake the role.

#### 4.4 Qualification

4.4.1 In many cases, particularly contractors, it may be appropriate for the DI to be professionally qualified in civil or structural engineering, e.g. a degree, MSc, MEng, PhD, and/or chartered. However, in any organisation, this depends on the scope of the company and the risk profile.

NOTE: This may not be the case in a one-off client or lower-risk work.

#### 4.5 Attributes

4.5.1 Depending on the type of work undertaken by the organisation, the following attributes are typical in a DI:

##### a.) Engineering knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrate extensive knowledge of the engineering principles appropriate to the core work carried out by the organisation they are serving (and its complexity).
- Apply technical knowledge to engineering and construction activities; and to identify limits of personal expertise.
- Takes the lead, e.g. when reviewing the suitability of their company's procedures for the management of temporary works.
- Demonstrate a level of understanding in relation to temporary works (and its design), design, construction, project interfaces, the consequences of failure and the need to coordinate any temporary works requirements with those of the permanent works.

##### b.) Management and leadership

- Leads by example within the organisation.
- Manage and develop individuals.



NOTE: They should establish a framework under which designers, TWCs and TWSs receive relevant training (see BS 5975: 2019, Clause 5.2) and keep up to date through refreshers (e.g. relevant continuing professional development (CPD)).

- Recognise the limits of expertise within a team, e.g. designers, TWCs and TWSs; and recommend training and development (as required).
- Develops and maintains respect of TWCs, e.g. in developing independent judgment of the TWC.
- Takes ownership of issues, e.g. the organisation's temporary works procedure, and knows when to update it to reflect regulatory changes and the business' core activities.

#### **c.) Health and safety**

Demonstrates:

- an extensive knowledge of UK health safety and welfare regulations applicable to their field of experience.
- a detailed knowledge of the CDM2015 and BS 5975: 2019.

#### **d.) Independent judgement**

- Takes reasoned and measured decisions based on information provided.
- Considers the pressures of time and budgets when reviewing health and safety-based decisions.
- Knows when to weigh up different courses of action, come to a risk-based decision and/or support the judgment made by others.

#### **e.) Communication**

- Communicates with individuals at all levels across the business in a clear and concise manner.

### **5.0 Closing remarks**

- 5.1 Ultimately, companies should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of their designated individual (DI) so that there is no ambiguity about what the function requires, and the responsibilities being placed on the individual undertaking the role.
- 5.2 A DI should be much more than a distant figurehead. They should be involved actively in any line management, e.g. in the appointment of TWCs (where appropriate), and in ensuring that any temporary works teams are established, set up properly and have a clear scope of work.
- 5.3 Although the level of involvement differs from company to company, and between the different types of organisation, the role of DI is to ensure that the risk in any temporary works within their company is managed safely.





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