

Book review

CDM REGULATIONS 2007 EXPLAINED

Raymond Joyce, Thomas Telford, London, 2007, ISBN 978-0-7277-3496-9, £50.00, 264 pp.

This book is presented as ‘the comprehensive guide to the obligations of all parties involved in a construction project under the new CDM regulations 2007’ and it certainly achieves the objective of addressing the duties and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in a construction project/process as introduced by the revision of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007.

The book is divided into 17 chapters ranging from an initial overview of health and safety law, and of the regulations, to the detailed analysis of the named duty holders and of the documents required for notifiable construction projects. Useful checklists are also included to facilitate an initial assessment of compliance for the various duty holders throughout the different phases of a construction project.

The introductory section is possibly not one of the most positive and is quite critical towards the regulations and changes from the 1994 version, especially with regards to the costs associated with their implementation. It is useful that the author has included a section on the framework of health and safety law because, despite the book being aimed more at a CDM-educated and experienced reader, it is important to appreciate the regulations in the context of the laws of Great Britain and of the European Union and to understand some of the fundamental principles, such as those of prevention and protection, to which the regulations frequently refer.

The regulations are subsequently analysed from a general perspective and then in more detail addressing the general principles of co-operation, co-ordination and prevention. Compliance with these principles is essential to ensure that the duty holders discharge their responsibilities and the specific section in the book is too ‘legally-worded’ for the not so experienced reader; a checklist, as included in the following chapter of the book, would have probably assisted a better understanding of the application of these principles in the various phases of a typical project.

It is interesting that the author has dedicated such a detailed chapter to welfare and hazardous operations even before addressing the various duty holders in the text; the aim of the

author is clearly to remind us of the importance of part 4 and schedule 2 of the regulations and how these are not just about designers and CDM co-ordinators but also, and very much, about site management and providing a safe place of work starting from very simple basic rules.

The analysis of the named duty holders including clients, designers, CDM co-ordinators, principal contractors and contractors is detailed and accurate but again with too many quotes from the regulations, which may confuse the reader who is trying to understand the basics with regards to roles, responsibilities and tasks. The chapter on the role of the designer is extremely interesting and deals with topics such as the link between the method of construction and design philosophy, which are the core on which the entire topic of foresee-ability of risk is based.

CDM co-ordinators will appreciate the contents of the chapter dedicated to their category and in particular how the author presents his case for a CDM co-ordinator with a suitable degree of design competence. Again this is not a chapter for ‘first-time’ CDM co-ordinators but it offers interesting elements for reflection and discussion such as who could be a CDM co-ordinator (a designer or a contractor?) and how to comply with the principles of co-ordination and co-operation.

The chapter on the construction phase plan is detailed and provides useful links between the importance of the document itself and the site health and safety management. In particular the client’s duty with regards to the approval of the document prior to commencement of works on site is quite rightly identified as ‘the most important duty of the client in exerting influence over the management of health and safety during construction works’. On the contrary, the chapter on the health and safety file is not so satisfactory and provides a description of the contents of the file that seems to suggest the inclusion of information that actually will not facilitate the preparation of a user-friendly document.

Ultimately the book provides what it says on the cover and it effectively ‘explains’ the contents of CDM Regulations 2007. However, the style is in part ‘too legal’ and relies extensively on quoting clauses of the regulations making this a text for experts on the subject and not for individuals who want to understand the basics in order to achieve compliance as duty

holders. On a very positive note there are a few chapters, such as those on welfare, hazardous operations and designers, which are very detailed to an extent that is not found in other publications and that I would recommend as reference for

training courses and presentations for clients, designers and contractors.

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