**Guidance for Contractor Supervision**

**Competence**

## **Version:** 002

## **Issued:** 2nd September 2025

1. **Purpose**

This document contains guidance on Contractor supervisor ratios per number of people working on site and the expected level of supervisor training required by Contractors appointed by and working for a Charter signatory HBF home building organisation.

The purpose of the guidance is to help provide consistency regarding the health and safety knowledge and understanding required of any supervisor working for a Contractor who oversees the work of others to ensure that tasks are completed correctly, efficiently and safely.

This guidance constitutes the minimum acceptable ratios and level of health and safety competency for those supervising work activities, appropriate to the hazards and risks involved in tasks being undertaken, and the number of the workforce being supervised.

1. **Scope**

This guidance applies to people employed and/or engaged by Contractors who are responsible for setting people to work and directly supervising the on-going work activities. They are the front-line supervisors (e.g., Supervisor, Ganger, Foreman, Charge-hand) with direct responsibility for ensuring they brief workers on how to carry out their work safely and monitor them to ensure that they are carrying out their work safely.

1. **Guidance**

To ensure that supervisors are appointed with the required health and safety qualification, there are typically three stages to be followed…

* 1. **Stage One - Pre-selection and Pre-tender**
     1. Charter signatory HBF home building organisations should make their Contractors aware of this guidance and of their intention to implement it on construction sites where they are going to be the Principal Contractor.
     2. Charter signatory HBF home building organisations should, for each trade Contractor appointed, request (i) details of the nominated supervisor(s) for each construction project and (ii) evidence of the nominated supervisor(s) health and safety competence.
     3. Upon receipt of the information required in section 3.1.2 Charter signatory HBF home building organisations should ensure it meets the requirements of the ratios and qualifications set out in section 3.1.4 of this guidance before moving to Stage Two.
     4. Recommended provision of site-based contractor supervisors to people working on site…

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1-8 people** | **9-16 people** | **17-24 people** | **25-32 people** | **33-40 people** | **41-48 people** |
| **Low**  **Risk** | 1 x SSSTS/ SMSTS | 2 x SSSTS**\***/ SMSTS | 2 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  1 x SMSTS | 3 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  1 x SMSTS | 4 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  1 x SMSTS | 4 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  2 SMSTS |
| Total no. of supervisors on site | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1-6 people** | **7-12 people** | **13-18 people** | **19-24 people** | **25-30 people** | **31-36 people** |
| **Medium**  **Risk** | 1 x SSSTS**\***/SMSTS | 2 x SSSTS**\***/SMSTS | 2 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  1 x SMSTS | 3 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  1 x SMSTS | 4 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  1 x SMSTS | 4 x site based SSSTS/SMSTS  and  2 x SMSTS |
| Total no. of supervisors on site | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1-4 people** | **5-8 people** | **9-12 people** | **13-16 people** | **17-20 people** | **21-24 people** |
| **High**  **Risk** | 1 x SMSTS | 1 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  1 x SMSTS | 2 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  1 x SMSTS | 2 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  2 x SMSTS | 3 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  2 x 2 SMSTS | 4 x SSSTS/SMSTS  and  2 x SMSTS |
| Total no. of supervisors on site | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** |

**\****If the site-based supervisor is SSSTS trained, then it is advisable that a ‘visiting’ SMSTS trained supervisor is in place to oversee the works.*

As a guide, the following are examples of trades and the potential risk category they may fall into…

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Low Risk Trade** | **Medium Risk Trade** | **High Risk Trade** |
| Ceramic Tiling  Cleaning  Fencing  Fire Protection  Insulation  Kitchen and Bathrooms Mastic  Painting and Decoration Soft Flooring  Soft Landscaping | Balconies  Brickwork  Dry Lining  Electrical  Enabling  Façade Finishes (cladding, etc.)  Carpentry  Hard Flooring  Hard Landscaping  Hoarding  Lift Installation  Logistics  Mechanical  PCC Beams  Plastering  Plumbing  Finishes (tile, asphalt, membranes, etc.)  Windows | Demolition  Civil Engineering  Ground Remediation Groundwork  Precast Concrete Floors  Piling  Roofing  Steel Erection  Reinforced Concrete Frame  Scaffolding  Timber Frame Erection  Asbestos Services |

**NOTES for section 3.1.4:**

The ratio of supervisors to operatives is a recommendation and Contractors should risk assess their scope of work to determine the ratio they consider to be adequate. Safety critical work that requires enhanced safety measures to be implemented and maintained may require enhanced, sometimes even one-to-one, supervisory ratios.

The ratios of supervisors per number of people on site by risk category should ideally be 1:4 for High Risk, 1:6 for Medium Risk and 1:8 for Low Risk.

This guide does not specify whether supervisors are ‘working’ or ‘non-working’. Charter signatory HBF home building organisations should liaise with their Contractors to determine this element.

* 1. **Stage Two – Supervisor Appointment**

3.2.1 Charter signatory HBF home building organisations should formally acknowledge and appoint Contractor supervisors on each of their construction projects; this could be done at the end of a specific supervisor’s induction or separately via another means

3.2.2 Charter signatory HBF home building organisations should ensure that appointed supervisors wear a designated (usually black) coloured safety helmet.

* 1. **Stage Three – Supervisor Engagement**

3.3.1 Once supervisors have been appointed, Charter signatory HBF home building organisations should arrange for their applicable Site Manager to meet with them to discuss, consider and agree the expectations that every supervisor will…

* Organise, manage and plan their work in line with program requirements.
* Be approachable and responsive with the ability to communicate clearly and effectively.
* Have the confidence to stop any unsafe work they witness by their people and others.
* Demonstrate their personal commitment to health and safety by always wearing their personal protective equipment, attending safety training, attending safety meetings, adhering to risk assessment and method statement requirements, not walking by unsafe conditions or unsafe acts, leading by example etc.
* Share their skills, knowledge and experiences with others to promote a positive attitude towards achieving safe and healthy standards.
* Understand risk management, especially in relation to the tasks being undertaken.
* Hold a Supervisor CSCS card and either the CITB 5-Day SMSTS or 2-Day SSSTS qualifications as per the recommended requirements set out in section 3.1.4.
* Brief their operatives on safe systems of work and ensure they understand and adhere to the specified control measures.
  + 1. Charter signatory HBF home building organisations should ensure their construction project site management teams…
* Demonstrate their personal commitment to health and safety.
* Show integrity and not walk past and ignore what is unsafe.
* Work with supervisors promoting collaboration and teamwork.
* Strive towards excellence and not compromise on safety or health.
* Treat everyone with respect.