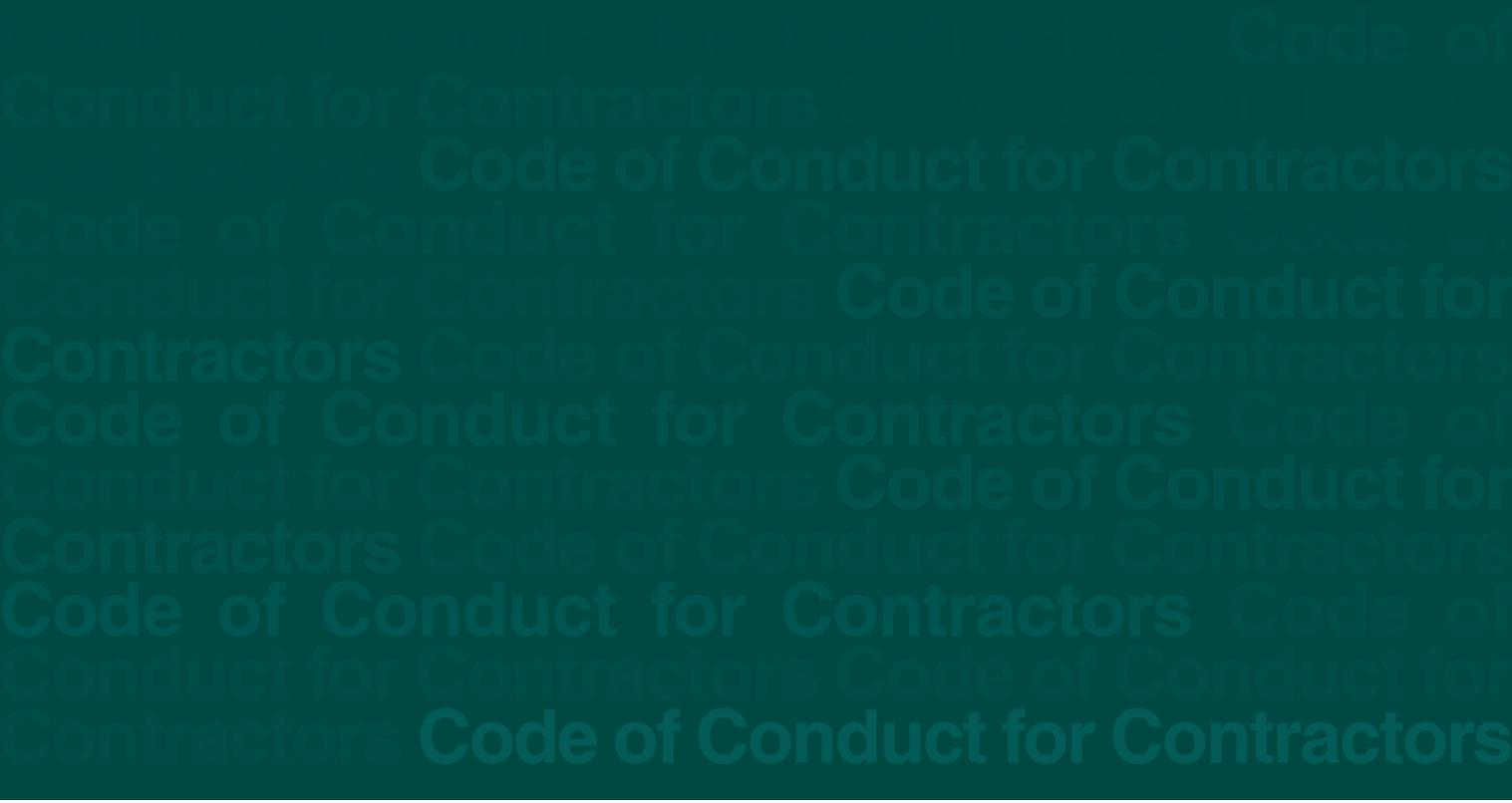




Code of Conduct for  
**Contractors**



This code of conduct is for contractors employed by SCH (Solihull Community Housing) and its partner associations.

The code has been set up in order to protect the interests of our tenants and leaseholders for whom SCH provide services; and also to protect contractors who deliver those services on behalf of SCH.

While contracted by SCH, you, your employees and any sub-contractors you use are expected to comply with the terms of this code.

Any breach of the code will be treated very seriously and may result in your name being removed from our approved list.

**Please note:** as a contractor you must make sure your work does not interfere with or weaken the fire-stopping measures in our high-rise blocks. You will be responsible for putting right any work you do that does – please see page 15 for more information.



# Contents

Legal and financial requirements	4	Female customers	10
Health and safety	4	Religious and ethnic considerations	10
Conduct with customers	4	Communicating with tenants who do not speak English	10
Valuing diversity and inclusion	4	Difficult situations	10
Harassment	5	Health and safety requirements for contractors	10
Violence at work	5	Responsibility of contractors	11
Confidentiality	5	Provision of plant and equipment	12
Confidentiality policy	5	Scaffolding	12
Private work	5	Prefabricated aluminium alloy towers	12
Contact with SCH managers and surveyors	6	Ladders	12
Gifts and hospitality	6	Work above ground level	12
Customer care	6	Roofs	12
Priorities and timescales	6	Cranes, hoists, lifting appliances and lifting gear	13
Identification cards	7	Excavation	13
Dress code	7	Demolition	13
Before starting work in a customer's home	7	Work with asbestos	13
Care of the customer's home and possessions	7	Sewer work	13
Conduct whilst in a customer's home	8	Road works	14
Leaving and returning to a property	8	Electrical equipment	14
On completion of the job	8	Precautions against fire and explosions	14
Additional work	8	Reporting of accidents	14
Working in void (empty) properties	8	Confined spaces	14
Disabled customers	9	<b>Fire integrity of high-rise blocks managed by SCH</b>	<b>15</b>
Communicating with deaf and hearing impaired customers	9	Sub-contractors	15
Visually impaired, blind or partially sighted customers	9		

## Legal and financial requirements

We will expect you to comply with all relevant aspects of the Taxation Construction Industry Scheme (CIS).

As a Contractor, you are required to have current public liability insurance cover to a minimum value of £2 million payable for any one event.

## Health and safety

SCH has a Health and Safety Policy which relates to all aspects of work carried out both by contractors and staff. A copy is available from SCH. You will be expected to comply with the instructions contained in the policy.

You should also ensure that you are aware of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM) and other statutory legislation.

If you have your own health and safety policy, you will need to send a copy to SCH so that we can ensure that customers' health and safety is adequately protected.

Whenever possible, and if known, we will advise you of situations where unusual risks may be present, for example, potentially violent residents or notifiable diseases. Or we can supply an asbestos report.

If you are unwilling to work in situations that include unusual risks, you must let the SCH Planned Maintenance Manager or SCH Maintenance Services Team Manager know so that an alternative contractor can be appointed.

## Conduct with customers

You should remember at all times that you are working in someone's home and you must treat it as such. You should ensure that all dealings with tenants, leaseholders, and employees of SCH are conducted in a professional manner.

Additionally, you should recognise that residents are paying for the service you provide through their rent or other charges. This should also be pointed out to your employees and sub-contractors.

If an occupier tells you that he or she does not want you to enter their home, please contact SCH as soon as possible and alternative arrangements will be made.

## Valuing diversity and inclusion

Please note that you have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate in any way in the provision of services to the public and in the way that you deal with our staff. This includes services to our customers.

We have an Equality and Diversity Policy, which states that we are committed to equal opportunities in the provision of services and in the employment of staff. We wish to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all and expect our contractors to assist us in meeting this objective.

We expect you also to afford equal opportunities of employment to your operatives and sub-contractors. SCH encourages all its contractors to offer employment to a diverse range of people and reflect the local community.

You must comply with SCH's Equality and Diversity Policy, which means that contractors will not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic or national origin, nationality, colour, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any other irrelevant factors such as appearance or HIV status.

## Harassment

We have a policy for dealing with incidents of harassment or violence against our customers. Any allegations of harassment by you, your employees or sub-contractors will be investigated. If proven, you will be removed from our approved list of contractors.

Any allegations of harassment against you, your employees or your sub-contractors will be treated with equal seriousness.

## Violence at work

Contractors may come across situations where violence or the threat of violence to them or others becomes apparent. It is advisable to try and minimise confrontation as soon as possible and not be drawn into arguments with others.

If the situation escalates, for safety reasons, it is acceptable to leave the premises as quickly as possible and tell the customer why. If incidents do occur you must tell SCH as soon as possible so that the appropriate action can be taken.

## Confidentiality

The contractor must maintain the highest levels of confidentiality regarding any personal information that is supplied to them about SCH customers, including any other information they acquire whilst working at the customer's home. Contractors must not discuss with the customer: SCH's business, other customers, other properties, previous workmanship or other contractors.

If a customer enquires about SCH's business, please redirect them to SCH.

## Confidentiality policy

You are expected to comply with SCH's Confidentiality Policy. This states that any information about SCH's work (particularly personal information about our staff and customers, which you may pick up during the course of your work) must be kept confidential.

## Private work

Members of SCH staff are not encouraged to employ you for private work. SCH staff must not gain any special advantage by virtue of their employment with SCH.

If SCH staff use the services of a consultant, contractor, professional adviser or other individual or firm they know also works for SCH, they must notify their line manager.

Any private work you carry out for tenants or staff must be kept on a completely separate basis from work you carry out for SCH.

If you do undertake work for a member of SCH staff, you should advise the appropriate SCH manager in writing.

Tenants should obtain permission from SCH before carrying out any work to their homes. However, it would be in your own interests to ensure that the appropriate SCH manager is aware of any work you have been asked to do privately for tenants.

You are expected not to accept any gifts or additional payments from residents, except where these payments reflect a separate agreement to undertake work, which is not the responsibility of SCH.

## Contact with SCH managers and surveyors

You should ensure that all dealings with our staff are conducted in a professional manner.

Our policies on equality and diversity, harassment, violence at work and health and safety and confidentiality apply in your dealings with staff as well as with customers.

Any breach of these policies, either by you, or against you, will be taken seriously, investigated and dealt with in accordance with the terms of the breached policy.

If any member of SCH staff or board member has a financial interest in your company, you may be excluded from working for SCH.

## Gifts and hospitality

SCH's staff and board members are required to declare any gifts or hospitality received from a contractor, and to seek prior permission before accepting. A small Christmas gift, for example, an item of office stationery or a calendar under £20 and modest hospitality will usually be acceptable.

## Customer care

For all day-to-day repairs, the contractor will be provided with a job order containing the name and address of the tenant, as well as the type and priority of work that is required, together with an appointed time to attend the property (if applicable).

The contractor will then contact the tenant to arrange a date and time to carry out the works, or make contact by letter or calling card.

SCH has required targets for completion of works, which are as follows.

## Priorities and timescales

The repairs service we offer our customers will:

- provide a 24-hour emergency repair service every day of the year
- respond to all emergency repairs within four hours
- carry out the repair first time and get it right first time
- keep the appointments we make
- respond to urgent works within three or seven working days depending on the type of repair requested.

For cyclical and planned works contracts (eg external painting works), SCH will write

to each customer affected giving them a broad idea of when the work will commence and who the contractor will be. Nearer the time, the contractor will arrange individual appointments with customers.

Appointments can be arranged with customers between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays. In the event of a customer breaking arrangements or refusing access, the contractor should immediately notify SCH.

Contractors must keep all appointments made and turn up punctually. If there are likely to be any delays, the tenant must be informed.

## Identification cards

All contractors must carry the SCH contractors' identification cards with them at all times.

On arrival at the property, introduce yourself and show your identification card. If the customer wishes to phone SCH in order to check that you are a legitimate contractor, you must respect the customer's right to do this, and remain outside the property until the customer is satisfied you are legitimate.

## Dress code

Contractors are required to wear an appropriate form of clothing, which is clean and tidy. Where necessary, they shall wear the required safety clothing and a high-visibility waistcoat with the SCH logo or a partner's or contractor's logo on it all the time they are in a tenant's property or in a high- or low-rise housing block. Wearing shorts or working topless are not acceptable.

## Before starting work in a customer's home

The contractor must:

- Explain to the tenant the nature of the work that is to be carried out.
- Check that this agrees with the work the tenant expects to be done. If there is a difference, contact SCH for advice.
- Explain how long the work will take and which rooms will be affected.
- Ask if materials and tools can be left in a particular place, checking they will not cause inconvenience to the tenant.

## Care of the customer's home and possessions

The contractor must:

- Treat all tenants and their homes with respect, and discuss the removal of delicate or valuable items from the work area with them, and the moving of furniture and other items if required.
- Wherever possible limit any disruption to just one room at a time.
- Take the necessary precautions to keep carpets and floors clean and protected by using dustsheets or plastic floor protection sheets.
- Get permission from the customer before using sinks, electricity and other services in the property.
- Ensure that all rubbish is removed on completion of works.
- Reconnect and test services such as gas, water and electricity at the end of each working day.

The contractor must compensate the customer for any damage to their property resulting from negligence by the contractor, and notify SCH immediately.

## Conduct whilst in a customer's home

Contractors must not:

- Introduce additional hazards e.g. stored material blocking access routes, tools left in communal areas.
- Smoke, eat, drink or play audio equipment.
- Consume alcohol or take drugs under any circumstances.
- Carry out works in the home without the customer being present, unless their express consent is obtained and a key is left with the managing contractor for access.
- Carry out works if only minors (children) are present at the property.
- Use foul or abusive language or threatening behaviour.
- Cause offence, inconvenience or personal harassment to a customer under any circumstances. This includes unkind, embarrassing, and inflammatory or damaging words or gestures. Respect and sensitivity should be shown to all customers, their relatives, friends and visitors and their home.

## Leaving and returning to a property

Contractors must inform the customer when leaving the property and on return to the property. This includes leaving the property to collect materials or to obtain further instructions. If it is necessary to leave, advise the customer:

- Of the anticipated return time to complete the work.
- Why it is necessary to leave the property before the work is completed.

## On completion of the job

- Ensure that all works are complete to a satisfactory standard.
- Remove all surplus material, equipment and rubbish, leaving the area of work clean and tidy.
- Inform the tenant that the work is complete.
- Instruct the tenant how to operate and maintain all new equipment and provide operation manuals.
- If an item needs to be left for a while before it can be used, ensure that protection or a notice is in place and that an explanation is given to the tenant e.g. 'Do not walk on the newly laid paving slabs for two or three hours'.
- Inform SCH that the work is complete, and provide any associated paperwork.

## Additional work

If a tenant requests additional work to be done in relation to the approved works order, the contractor should contact SCH for further guidance.

## Working in void (empty) properties

Contractors may only remove abandoned belongings from void properties (including garages) with the express written permission of SCH. A full inventory together with photographic evidence must be taken of any items removed and given to the SCH Void Team Manager.

## Disabled customers

When working within the home of a customer with a mobility impairment, it is important to ensure that you don't leave obstacles in their way. If the nature of the work is likely to cause some inconvenience or obstruction, discuss this with the customer.

If furniture and other items need to be moved, ask the customer to show you where to put them (where they won't interfere with your work). As soon as the work is finished, replace the items. If it is necessary to leave the premises, ensure that tools and equipment are out of the way.

Clear up rubbish and spillages as quickly as possible. Wet floors, dust and paper pose particular hazards for people using walking aids.

## Communicating with deaf and hearing impaired customers

There are a number of steps that can be taken to facilitate better communication with a customer who has impaired hearing, including:

- Making sure that you have attracted their attention.
- Facing the person when you are talking to them, speaking clearly and using your usual tone. Don't raise your voice unless the person asks you to do so as raising your voice could distort what you are saying and make it difficult to lip read.
- Being prepared to write things down. This will not always be appropriate, since some people who use sign

language may not be able to read written text (sentences in sign languages are structured differently).

- Letting the customer know if you will be making excess noise eg drilling or hammering.
- Giving clues as to what you are talking about in your face, your body language and the gestures you make.
- Letting the customer know if you have to leave the premises for example to get work tools and equipment from the van.

## Visually impaired, blind or partially sighted customers

When working within the home of a visually impaired customer, it is important that contractors give them clear information.

- On arrival at the premises, introduce yourself, using (when appropriate) an agreed password or by showing your identity card.
- Explain where you will be working and what you will be doing.
- If you need to move items of furniture, ask the customer where you should place them and ensure you replace them in exactly the same position on completion of the job.
- Ask the customer to show you a place you can safely leave work materials.
- If you have to leave the premises for any reason let the customer know, and if possible, give them an idea of when you will be returning.

## Female customers

Some women may feel nervous about having a stranger in their home. It is important therefore, to identify yourself, your organisation and purpose of visit before entering the premises.

It is in the interest of both you and the customer that you are approachable but formal and that the customer feels confident about asking you questions.

## Religious and ethnic considerations

Try not to disturb anything you think might be a religious object without first asking the customer if it can be moved. If a tenant asks you to comply with a particular practice related to their religion or ethnicity respect their request whenever possible. If this is going to have implications for your safety or ability to carry out the work, contact SCH. An example of this may be if you are asked to remove your safety shoes before entering a room.

## Communicating with customers who do not speak English

SCH can arrange for an interpreter to be present if the customer's first language is not English.

## Difficult situations

There may be occasions, particularly when working in occupied properties, when a contractor may feel uncomfortable about the circumstances or the behaviour of the customer or their guests (for example, if the customer is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, is verbally abusive, or makes sexual advances).

If a situation like this occurs, and you feel you cannot work in the circumstances, explain to the customer, if possible, why you are leaving and report the problem to SCH.

If valuables are left within your working area (for example purses, cheque books or jewellery), ask the customer to move them to somewhere more secure. This is to protect you in case the valuables go missing.

## Health and safety requirements for contractors

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty upon SCH to ensure that all the property it controls is safe. The requirements set out below must be complied with by all contractors and sub-contractors working on premises or land which are in any way under the control of SCH.

These requirements are for clarification and are not intended to increase the contractor's own duties under the Act or take away any liability under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, or under the terms of the contract.

## Responsibilities of contractors

Before commencing work, the contractor must be acquainted with all Acts and Regulations relevant to the work and agree throughout the duration of the contract to comply with them. For example:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999.
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations, 2007.
- The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations, 1998.
- The Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, 1996.
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, 1999.
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations, 1992.
- The Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations, 1992.
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations, 1998.

Any special conditions laid down by SCH which have been notified to the contractor at the time of tendering, must also be adhered to. The attention of the contractor is also drawn to guidance notes published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The contractor will be responsible for the appointment of a safety representative or other such named person, as defined in the contractor's safety policy statement. The contractor will forward the name of the person, on commencement of the work, to SCH.

The contractor will ensure that:

- They have a clearly defined safety policy and that all employees are aware of its contents.
- Satisfactory and safe systems of work are established.
- The area of work, siting of temporary buildings and storage areas for dangerous substances (for example liquefied petroleum gas and petroleum spirit) have been clearly defined.
- They are fully aware of any emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points that may be in force.
- The sharing or provision of sanitary, welfare, canteen and first aid facilities has been agreed with the parties concerned.
- Any necessary licences, permits or consents in connection with the work have been obtained.
- A structural engineer has been consulted where excavations are required near buildings or additional weight is being placed on the structure.
- Safe passage is maintained for members of the public in areas to which they have rightful access, particular attention being paid to blind or other disabled persons, elderly persons and children.
- The position of all public utilities which might endanger health and safety has been identified and any necessary precautions taken.

## Provision of plant and equipment

Where the contractor provides tools, plant or equipment for the works, such items shall be suitable for their purpose and shall be used safely. The equipment owned or provided by SCH for its employees' use may not be used by the contractor, unless permission has been given by a person authorised to do so by SCH.

## Scaffolding

All scaffolding must be erected to conform to the relevant British Standards Institute Code of Practice and the provisions of the Construction (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1996. The contractor will be responsible for the statutory inspection of scaffolds and the keeping of a scaffold register. Folding trestles must only be used to support a working platform.

The contractor will be responsible for the marking and lighting of scaffolding, hoardings etc to warn of their presence where applicable.

## Prefabricated aluminium alloy towers

This equipment must be erected and used in accordance with the Code of Practice issued by the Prefabricated Aluminium Scaffolding Manufacturers Association (PASMA) and the Working at Height Regulations 2005.

## Ladders

All ladders must be a suitable length for the particular work being undertaken and shall be securely fixed at the correct angle. Work must not be carried out from a ladder unless a written risk assessment indicates this is the best option.

All ladders must be removed and rendered inaccessible on completion of work and at the end of the day.

## Work above ground level

Safeguards must be taken when necessary, to prevent the fall of persons and material by the provision of guard rails, toe boards or mesh guards. Materials must not be thrown to lower levels. All materials must be lowered by means of hoists, gin wheels, ropes or chutes.

## Roofs

Roof ladders, or crawler boards, must always be used for work on pitched roofs. The weight of the operative must always be borne by a roof ladder or crawler board. Where access to a work place is alongside a fragile roof, the fragile roof must be covered or a guard rail provided to protect the access.

## Cranes, hoists, lifting appliances and lifting gear

All equipment must be erected, examined, tested and used in accordance with statutory regulations and the appropriate certificates obtained, which must be available for inspection by a nominated person of SCH and the Health and Safety Officer on request. The safe working load must be clearly marked on all equipment.

## Excavation

Excavation must be properly shored or battered to the correct angle of repose of the strata to prevent collapse. Edges of excavation must be protected by a continuous rigid barrier, where applicable, unless alternative methods have been agreed between the contractor and SCH. In addition, excavations near where the general public has rightful access to pass must be clearly identified and partitioned. Warning lights during the hours of darkness or periods of low visibility are also required where work is likely to take more than eight hours.

## Demolition

All demolition work must be carried out in accordance with the British Standard Code of Practice, and the Construction Design Management Regulations 2007. Careful inspection of a structure to be demolished must be carried out before work commences. Any available drawings must be consulted in order to determine type of structure it is and where the load-bearing walls, cellars and sewers etc are. Ensure that consultation has taken place with statutory undertakers and that all services have been cut off.

Hoardings and protective fans shall be erected around sites where the general public is likely to be affected. The emission of dust must be minimised by means of damping down.

The site must be left in a safe condition and secure from outside interference when the day's work is over.

## Work with asbestos

Where asbestos may be disturbed, an asbestos survey report must be obtained prior to work. In the event of accidental disturbance of an asbestos-containing material, the SCH emergency procedure must be followed and contact made with SCH immediately.

Asbestos must be removed and disposed of in strict accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006, the Approved Code of Practice for Management of Asbestos 2006 and HSE-approved codes of practice.

## Sewer work

This work must be done as required by the Confined Spaces Regulations 1997.

All persons required to enter manholes and sewers must be fully aware of the hazards associated with this work eg gases, water, slippery surfaces and bacterial contamination. All activities undertaken must be in accordance with the Code of Practice for the 'Safe Working in Sewers and Sewage Works' issued by the Institute of Civil Engineers.

- The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997;
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;

- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended);
- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended);
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998;
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989;
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

## Road works

All road works must have warning signs clearly visible to all road users and pedestrians.

All such traffic signs and layout must conform to the Traffic Signs Manual in size, colour, layout and positioning.

## Electrical equipment

All work must be carried out in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1999, and, where possible, all portable tools and site lighting must be used at reduced voltage i.e. 110v or lower. A qualified competent electrician must carry out all electrical work.

## Precautions against fire and explosions

The contractor must comply with the following:

- Existing emergency exits and fire fighting equipment shall be kept clear of obstruction at all times.
- The storage of petroleum spirit and liquefied petroleum gas must comply with relevant legislation.
- 'No smoking' signs must be obeyed.
- Any fire fighting equipment required is to be supplied by the contractor.

## Reporting of accidents

All accidents and dangerous occurrences affecting contractors' or sub-contractors' employees shall be notified in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995 and a copy of such notification shall be forwarded to SCH.

The contractor's accident records, in relation to the contract, shall be made available for inspection by SCH on request. In addition, all accidents occurring to SCH employees or members of the public shall be notified to SCH.

## Confined spaces

A confined space is determined as any room, well, shaft or conduit, whether it be above or below ground which is enclosed without natural light or natural ventilation, or any place where the atmosphere is likely to become stagnant, oppressive or toxic. In such circumstances The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997 will apply.

## Fire integrity of high-rise blocks managed by SCH

Our high-rise blocks have rising service ducts containing water, gas, electrical, soil and vent pipes, CCTV, data, telephone and television services. Where pipes, cables and ducts pass through walls and floors, fire compartment integrity is maintained by Nullifire compound, or Nullifire collars in the case of larger pipes or ducts, to provide four hours of fire protection.

When service providers are cutting or drilling new holes through walls and floors to provide services to customers, contractors are to ensure that:

- SCH are made aware of the works to be undertaken and location.
- If you complete the works by use of an existing protected aperture, then four-hour fire protection is to be reinstated.
- If your work involves forming new holes through any wall or floor, then on completion of the works, the required four-hour fire protection must be in place, before leaving site.

SCH is currently reviewing our management arrangements in this area, and if we find unprotected work, and can identify the service provider responsible, then we will carry out the necessary fire protection work and forward the appropriate claims for costs to the responsible contractor.

## Sub-contractors

The use of sub-contractors is only permitted by prior agreement with SCH.

The contractor will provide SCH with a list of all sub-contractors under the contract, and draw their attention to these requirements.



**Contact Centre:**

**0121 717 1515**

**[www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk](http://www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk)**

Date of publication: February 2011