

Safety Schemes In Procurement (SSIP)

The Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) Forum, supported by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), is a series of 'deem to satisfy' agreements between the construction industry's leading health and safety pre-qualification schemes.

By facilitating mutual recognition between member schemes, SSIP aims to reduce duplication at the first stage of pre-qualification as companies assessed by one scheme can automatically register with others.

With SSIP, companies only have to go through the initial assessment process once in order to register with a number of pre-qualification schemes.

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Who is your Competent Person?

All SSIP member schemes require employers to appoint Competent Persons in accordance with Regulation (7) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and it is a criminal offence not to do so.

As providers of the NSCC Health and Safety Helpline, Safety Services (UK) Ltd is offering 40% discount to all NSCC Specialist Contractors for its Safetynet Competent Person Scheme.

This includes:

- Access to Competent Person
- CVs for evidence of competent advisory service
- Online access to WISE (Wireless Inspection Safety Extranet) with Fault Management, reporting, KPIs etc.
- Unlimited 24/7 helpline access
- One free place on an annual H&S Update Seminar
- Regular Newsletters and Bulletins
- New Health and Safety Policy
- Membership Certificate.

Further levels of the Safetynet scheme are available that include preparation of annual SSIP submissions (CHAS, EXOR etc.), Office Audits, Workplace Inspections etc.

For further information, please contact Safety Services (UK) Ltd:

Lakeside Industrial Estate
Stanton Harcourt
Oxfordshire
OX29 5SL

T: 0845 402 5050
F: 01865 883467
safetynet@safetyservices.co.uk
www.safetyservices.co.uk



NSCC Specialist Contractors should quote the name of their trade association to take advantage of the 40% discount

Why was SSIP formed?

By bringing together the largest health and safety pre-qualification schemes in the UK which collectively have 50,000 registered sub-contractors, SSIP has the potential to radically reduce the industry's pre-qualification problem.

The bureaucracy and duplication associated with pre-qualification costs the industry millions of pounds every year. It is estimated that annually 5,000 contractors collect information on 180,000 sub-contractors using more than 2 million questionnaires and the industry has to generate £1 billion in turnover to compensate for the cost of this process! SSIP was established in response to a call from Government departments to tackle this inefficiency and waste, which impacts on the 'bottom line', primarily of SMEs who lack the resources to cope with the paperwork.

Accreditation by an SSIP member scheme demonstrates that a company has met the HSE-recognised standard for the first stage of pre-qualification. Mutual recognition by other SSIP member schemes gives contractors and clients the confidence that their sub-contractors have already satisfied stage one, allowing them to focus on the project-specific requirements at stage two. For sub-contractors, SSIP means filling in fewer duplicate questionnaires, saving both time and money.

Who is part of SSIP?

SSIP was founded by the Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS), Constructionline, Exor Management Services and the National House Building Council (NHBC) with the support of the HSE and industry umbrella organisations including NSCC.

Since its formal launch in November 2009, a number of other schemes have joined SSIP and a full list of those which have 'deem to satisfy' agreements in place can be found at www.ssip.org.uk

SSIP has three categories of membership:

- **Registered** – any third party qualification scheme
- **Affiliate** – a party wishing to support SSIP's ethos, aims and objectives
- **Co-opted** – expert interested organisations that play a role in promoting, improving or enhancing health and safety competence in procurement.

What does SSIP mean for Specialist Contractors?

The creation of SSIP means that, if a company has already been assessed by one SSIP member scheme, it can now register with others for a reduced fee via a process known as ‘special registration’ without going through a further assessment process in the majority of cases.

In effect, companies can now be considered as SSIP accredited sub-contractors – rather than ‘CHAS’, ‘EXOR’ or ‘NHBC’ etc. If a contractor demands a particular SSIP scheme at pre-qualification stage one and a company has already been assessed by another SSIP scheme, it can apply for ‘special registration’ with the contractor’s preferred scheme under a ‘deem to satisfy’ agreement. This will save the company the time and cost of going through the initial assessment process with a multitude of schemes.

Please note that some SSIP members such as Constructionline have a one way ‘deem to satisfy’ agreement only. This means that they will accept information from other SSIP members for ‘special registration’ but the information that they hold will not be accepted by other SSIP members. For example, a company which has been assessed by CHAS can apply for ‘special registration’ with Constructionline under a ‘deem to satisfy’ agreement. However, companies assessed by Constructionline will not be eligible for ‘special registration’ with other SSIP schemes.

What are the different routes to registering with an SSIP scheme?

1. The contractor demands a particular SSIP scheme

It is common for contractors to require their sub-contractors to register with their preferred scheme. If a sub-contractor has already been assessed by another SSIP member, it can apply for ‘special registration’ with the contractor’s preferred scheme on the basis of an SSIP ‘deem to satisfy’ agreement.

2. The sub-contractor has a choice of SSIP scheme

Contractors may instruct their sub-contractors to seek assessment under any SSIP member scheme. In this case, the sub-contractor should select the scheme that it feels will provide best value in terms of assessment fees, the contractor’s use of a particular scheme, and the validity period for the assessment etc.

3. The sub-contractor is already registered with another SSIP scheme

Sub-contractors assessed by one SSIP member and seeking recognition with others can apply for ‘special registration’ with them in the majority of cases. Acceptance will be dependent on a number of factors and the sub-contractor should check with individual schemes direct.

How long does an initial assessment take and what will it cost?

The assessment process varies from scheme to scheme and will depend on the sub-contractor providing all the information required. Generally, SSIP members will complete an initial assessment within ten working days; however, details should be checked with individual schemes direct.

All SSIP members determine their own assessment costs which can be checked with individual schemes direct.

Is additional information required to apply for 'special registration' with another SSIP scheme?

Companies that have already been assessed by one SSIP member may be required to provide additional information in order to apply for 'special registration' with others. This is likely to include evidence to satisfy more detailed health and safety questions or financial data which is required by some contractors.

Companies that meet the criteria for 'special registration' with another SSIP scheme will, in many cases, not have to pay the full assessment fee.

Does SSIP accept information from the Builder's Profile?

The Builder's Profile is an information exchange service which is neither assessed nor audited. It can be accepted by SSIP members to collect the data that they require – rather than companies having to complete their forms. Each scheme can then assess the information provided as required.

CHAS has officially linked up with the Builder's Profile to accept information from sub-contractors as an application for assessment, and the Builder's Profile includes all the questions required by CHAS.

The Builder's Profile is available to sub-contractors for an annual fee of £275 plus VAT (£199 plus VAT for NSCC members). For further information on the Builder's Profile, please visit www.buildersprofile.co.uk



What action should be taken if a contractor insists on a particular scheme?

If a company has already been assessed by an SSIP member and the contractor demands another SSIP scheme, the company should notify the contractor that there are now 'deem to satisfy' agreements in place between the schemes under SSIP. On page 7, there is a letter to amend and send to contractors which introduces SSIP and promotes the fact that a company has already been assessed for pre-qualification stage one by an SSIP member.

If the contractor demands a non-SSIP scheme, the company should inform the contractor that it already meets the HSE-recognised standard for the first stage of pre-qualification under SSIP. The letter on page 7 can be amended and sent to contractors as appropriate to introduce the SSIP initiative.

SSIP is being widely promoted to contractors and other key stakeholders in the industry, and Specialist Contractors can help by notifying NSCC via email of any contractors that insist on using a non-SSIP scheme at enquiries@nsc.org.uk

How long is SSIP accreditation valid?

The validity period for each SSIP member varies but accreditation with most schemes is valid for one or two years.

'Special registration' with additional schemes will depend on the date that the original health and safety assessment was undertaken. For example, if a company was initially assessed by EXOR in September 2009, which has a two year health and safety validity period, and it applies for 'special registration' with CHAS in March 2010, its CHAS registration would be valid until its EXOR accreditation expired in September 2011.

What is the SSIP Portal?

The SSIP Portal contains live, up to date information on more than 20,000 contractors that have been assessed by SSIP member schemes. This enables Specialist Contractors to demonstrate to any client that they meet the recognised standard for health and safety performance without filling in additional questionnaires. Clients can register for an annual fee to search the SSIP Portal to verify that a contractor holds a current health and safety certification from an SSIP member scheme. If your company has been assessed by an SSIP member scheme, your details will appear on the SSIP Portal free of charge. For more information visit www.ssiportal.org.uk

Companies looking for further information on how they can benefit from SSIP should visit www.ssip.org.uk

Template letter to send to contractors demanding a particular scheme

Click here to
download letter

Insert date

Insert name and address of contractor

Dear *insert contact name at contractor*

Pre-Qualification Under SSIP

We have been invited to pre-qualify under *insert name of accreditation scheme* to join your approved supply chain. There are now 'deem to satisfy' agreements in place between a range of schemes and you can find a full list on the SSIP website at www.ssip.org.uk. This means that companies like ours which has already been accredited by one SSIP member scheme can now automatically register with others in the majority of cases.

SSIP has been formed by assessment schemes, trade associations and the HSE in an effort to simplify the pre-qualification stage of procurement. As you know, maintaining a list of competent sub-contractors can be a time consuming and costly task for all parties involved. This is particularly true for the supply chain, which is repeatedly required to go through the pre-qualification process, and SSIP is designed to improve standards of health and safety in the industry whilst reducing duplication.

Mutual recognition by SSIP enables you to be confident that a sub-contractor which has been approved by one SSIP member is stage one assessed and meets the core criteria for health and safety competence in the Approved Code of Practice to the 2007 CDM Regulations, leaving you to focus on the project specific requirements under stage two. We are already registered with *insert name of accreditation scheme* and this is recognised by *insert name of accreditation scheme*, so we can confirm that our company already meets your pre-qualification requirements.

You may also be interested to note that all our company information is available on the Builder's Profile at the touch of a button. The Builder's Profile is an online service providing a quick and efficient way for companies to send their pre-qualification information without the need for duplicate paper questionnaires. It is available free of charge for all main contractors and further information can be found at www.buildersprofile.co.uk. *

Details of SSIP can be found at www.ssip.org.uk but please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Insert name

* Delete if not a member of the Builder's Profile