

Operational Health & Safety Instruction relating to: **Contractor Competence**

1 Introduction

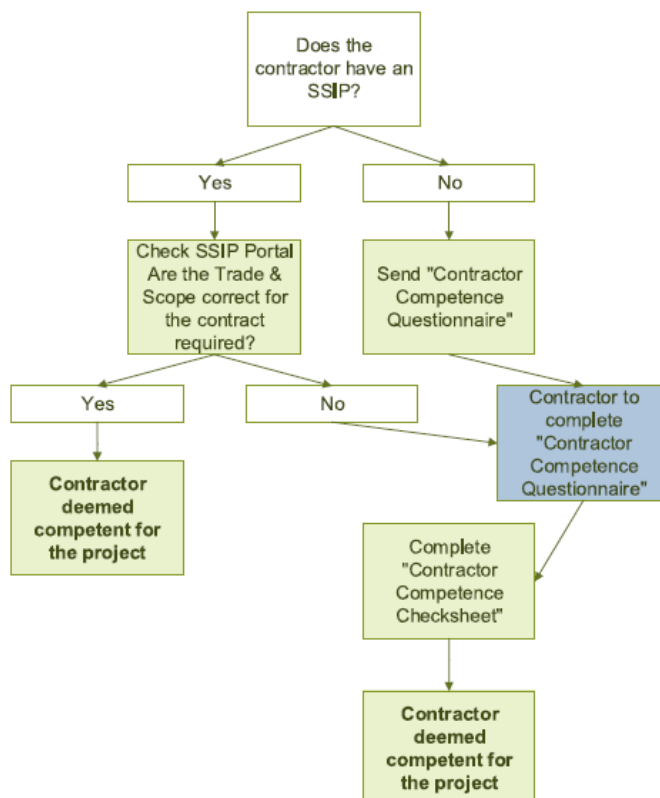
These Instructions provide a step-by-step approach for Natural England Staff to use when assessing contractor competence. It is the legal duty of anyone engaging a contractor to ensure that the contractor has the relevant skills, knowledge, and experience to carry out the activity they are being engaged to complete.

All construction contractors engaged by NE should hold a valid Safety Schemes In Procurement (SSIP) certificate in the correct trade and scope.

All other contractors should be able to demonstrate a H&S system to the equivalent of SSIP certification.

If an SSIP is not held by the contractor then the contractor must complete a Natural England Contractor Competence Questionnaire which is then assessed by the representative of Natural England who is engaging the contractor.

2 How to assess competence?



3 What is SSIP?

Founded in May 2009, Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) is an umbrella organisation that pulls together multiple occupational health and safety schemes with the aim of reducing costs

and duplication for both suppliers and buyers, particularly but not limited to those, in the construction industry.

SSIP members who provide these schemes accredit suppliers through conducting assessments. These require the supplier to complete forms which are sent remotely to an external auditor who then assesses current health and safety practices and procedures against SSIP core criteria endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Recognised members of SSIP include:

- Contractors Health & Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS)
- Safety Management Advisory Services (SMAS)
- Alcumus Safe Contractor
- CQMS
- Acclaim (Part of Construction Line)
- Avetta
- ARB Approved Contractor Scheme
- National Access & Scaffolding Confederation (NASC)
- National Federation of Demolition Contractors (NFDC)

For a complete list of current SSIP Forum Membership please see <https://SSIP.org.uk/>.

4 How to check if a contractor has an SSIP

You can check if a contractor holds an SSIP certificate or check the validity of an SSIP certificate by:

1. <https://www.ssiportal.org.uk/Home>

Verify an SSIP Certificate

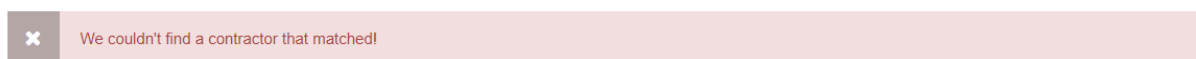
Enter the name as displayed on the certificate provided by the organisation.

Organisation Name

Enter Exact Name

☐ Search for Exact Match

2. Enter the name of the contractor
 - a. If no result, then it is likely the contractor does not hold a valid SSIP



- b. If a result is returned then ensure you check:
 - i. Correct company name
 - ii. Correct company address
 - iii. Trade
 - iv. Scope

Example:

GM Services Cornwall Ltd	SSIP Approved: Contractor Assessed Against: Lighting Installation, Gas-Fired Central heating System Installation / Maintenance, Plumbing, Electrical Contractor (Commercial / Industrial), Mechanical Plant Installation / Maintenance	Wellington Road Stores, Wellington Road, St Dennis, Cornwall, St Austell PL26 8BN	18/01/2023
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The above contractor would not be suitable to engage for fencing work as it is not listed as a trade they have been assessed against.

Evidence of a valid SSIP certificate in the correct trade and scope will need to be demonstrated at the start of every contract.

Please save a copy of the SSIP webpage (similar to the above example) in the file or the project (TRIM, SPOL etc)

5 Non SSIP Contractors

It is recognised that not all contractors engaged by Natural England will hold an SSIP certificate (surveyors and some long-standing contractors who have good working relationships with NE for example). However, NE still have a duty to assess the competence of these contractors. Therefore, a contractor can demonstrate their H&S management system by completing NE [Contractor Competence Questionnaire](#).

Once received the NE representative engaging the contractor will need to assess the Contractor Competence Questionnaire, using the [Contractor Competence Check Sheet](#) to record what has been assessed and the outcome. Please engage with your [H&S contact](#) if you require support when assessing a contractor with this method.

A non SSIP contractor must complete the Contractor Competence Questionnaire annually if engaged for contracts involving the same scope and trade. If a non SSIP contractor is engaged for job requiring a different trade and/or scope the contractor must complete the Contractor Competence Questionnaire with the details of the new trade and/or scope.

Example:

A&B Ltd do not hold an SSIP are engaged to carry out some fencing works. A&B Ltd must complete the Contractor Competence Questionnaire and be assessed by the NE representative using the Contractor Competence Questionnaire for the task of fencing.

If A&B Ltd are then engaged to carry out some electrical works they will need to complete the Contractor Competence Questionnaire again, submitting their training evidence of electrical work.