



THE BENEFITS OF JOINING
**A HEALTH & SAFETY
COMPETENT PERSON SCHEME**

And Protect Your Business Without The Hassle



Contents

[Introduction - Page 3](#)

[Falls From Height - Page 4](#)

[Why Having Access to a Health & Safety CP Is Necessary To Help Prevent Incidents - Page 6](#)

[Common Myth: Health & Safety Takes Too Much Time - Page 7](#)

[Common Myth: I'll Save Cash If I Do It Myself - Page 8](#)

[Common Myth: My Client Will Never Know - Page 9](#)

[Common Myth: All Health & Safety Is Overblown - Page 10](#)

[Common Myth: The Competent Person Scheme Does Nothing For Me - Page 11](#)

[The Truth: Why a Competent Person Scheme is a Must For Your Business - Page 11](#)

[The Differences Between Marpal And Other Types Of Competent Person Schemes - Page 12](#)

[Why Choose Marpal? - Page 13](#)

[Ready To Begin The Process Of Health & Safety Compliance? - Page 14](#)

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Introduction

For those in the construction industry, it's no secret that there are many dangers faced by those working on site. From the unwieldy materials and equipment, to the hazardous environment, incidents are more likely to occur on construction sites when compared to say, an office environment.

As a contractor, employee or worker, you've possibly either experienced an accident in the workplace or witnessed this happen to someone else; when it comes to hazardous activities that involve workers, large machinery and heavy equipment, quite often there are significant levels of risk involved.

Accidents can lead to significant life changing injuries and in some case, even loss of life; 38 fatalities between 2017/18 within the construction industry alone. You may have had an incident on one of your projects and been fortunate enough to avoid anyone being harmed, if so, as an employer you may still find yourself susceptible to prosecution. Prosecution under any circumstances, will cost you money, time and certainly your business reputation.

When working on site, are you doing enough to protect your workforce and prevent accidents from occurring?

When it comes to health and safety, many companies try to "make do" without having access to a Competent Person, instead sharing responsibilities between employees who may or may not be suitably trained. However, having access to a designated Competent Person will ensure that health and safety is a priority and provide the assistance and support required – something that an employee with a pre-existing role may struggle with as their main role will always take priority, the second unofficial job of health and safety can easily be overlooked.

One way to ensure that you are compliant and your workplace is safer, for yourself and your employees, is to appoint a Competent Person or join a Health and Safety Competent Person Scheme. These appointments don't discharge your health and safety responsibilities, but quite simply, allows you or your employees to pick up the phone and speak to a designated Competent Person at any time for help, advice, guidance and clarity on all things related to health and safety.

What happens on-site when you don't have access to a Competent Person? Consider the following scenario:

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Falls From Height

For construction companies, it's common to be working at height; Working At Height is classed as any distance where a fall could occur that may cause an injury. This is especially true for work on domestic or commercial buildings, where working from a height is unavoidable.

Accidents do happen – but accidents that happen due to negligence can have severe ramifications. If you have access to a Competent Person, or you have clear, correct Health & Safety procedures in place, then any accident that takes place on your site may be due to unforeseen circumstance. However, should an incident take place without the correct Health & Safety protocols in place, you may be severely scrutinised and face significant punishment from Enforcing Authorities.

Health & Safety negligence in the construction industry frequently occurs and has devastating consequences. In 2017 a small construction company's negligence resulted in the serious injury of two workers. The company, who employed workers at a site in north-west London, failed to provide adequate structural support for the building under construction. Under the combined weight of four bricklayers, the lack of proper support led to the first floor collapsing and two of the four workers falling through, suffering serious injuries. 18 months on, both employees are still unable to return to full-time work.



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Falls From Height

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the site's Principal Contractor had failed to comply with safety legislation, and the company was fined £165,000.

This incident could have been prevented had there been a sufficient risk assessment in place and the appropriate controls implemented. Having access to a Competent Person would ensure that Health & Safety protocols are in place to minimise the risks of falls from height.

Had the contractor had access to a Health and Safety Competent Person, the contractor could have utilised their competence and their Competent Person would have been able to advise them accordingly. Using their knowledge and insight, this accident could have been prevented.



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Why Having Access to a Health & Safety Competent Person Is Necessary To Help Prevent Incidents

In the construction industry, no one is exempt from Health & Safety responsibilities. However, the purpose of a Competent Person is to be a source of advice and assistance, to help a company meet their obligations, ensuring that Health & Safety takes priority with minimal inconvenience. This allows work to continue uninterrupted while also keeping the safety of all workers, contractors and staff members at the forefront.

Signing up to a Competent Person Scheme is one of the ways you can offer a duty of care to your employees, ensuring they have the highest possible level of safety in their workplace. This ensures that they can continue to do their job appropriately while maintaining the high standards of safety and employee support they should expect during their working day.

We debunk some of the most common myths construction companies have about appointing a Competent Person and take a closer look at why safety is not optional - it's mandatory.



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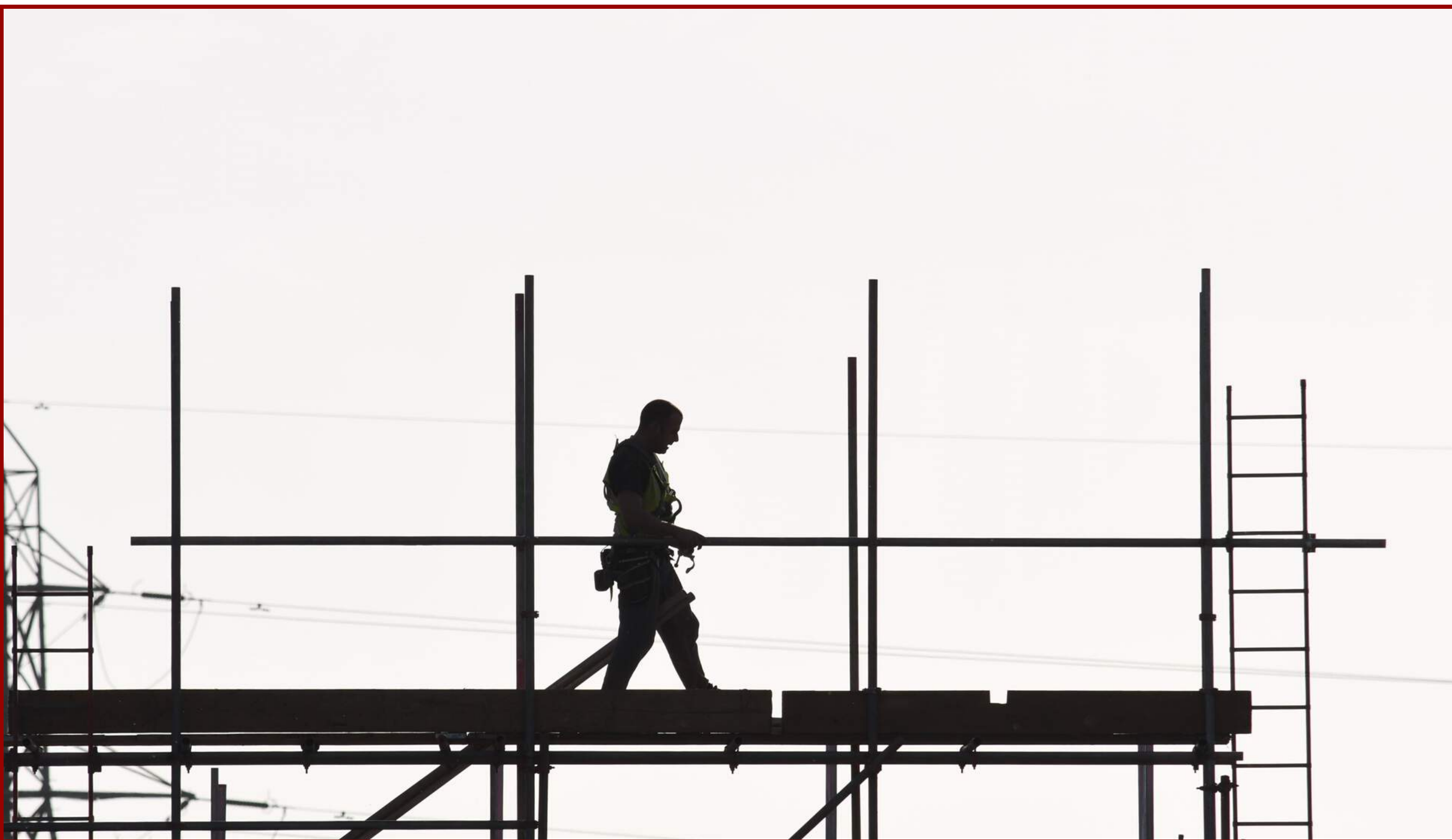


Common Myth: Health & Safety Takes Too Much Time

As a small business, it can be tempting to think that Health & Safety is a concept more suited to larger businesses, complete with designated Health & Safety departments that maintain the company's requirements for them; after all, what small construction company has time to complete all the Health & Safety requirements placed upon them? This belief can certainly feel true when Health & Safety is delegated to existing, untrained, and already-overloaded workers. This attitude and approach is typical, but it couldn't be further from the truth when it comes to your own business.

Utilising a Competent Person Scheme and laying those foundations for real Health & Safety ensures that you are covered for the future. When it comes to accidents and incidents, having a Competent Person on-side can make all the difference by preventing problems before they happen. The time cost up-front is far less than the damage to your business, should work be shut down due to a workplace incident or genuine Health & Safety concerns.

Does maintaining a sufficient level of Health & Safety take time? Marpal's Health & Safety Competent Person Scheme is delivered swiftly and mitigates much of that extra work, offering you one place to clarify queries, understand your requirements as a company and gain insight into your safety needs.



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Common Myth: I'll Save Cash If I Do It Myself

For any small construction business rushing from job to job, the concept of paying out extra money for additional business requirements such as Health & Safety can seem unappealing. This is especially true if you're already trying to cut back in other ways, in an increasingly more competitive industry; any place you can save money is a good thing, isn't it?

While taking the DIY approach to Health & Safety seems like a good idea when all is going well, doing it all yourself just doesn't hold the same appeal when it all goes wrong. Without having access to a Competent Person, easily avoidable injuries, accidents or other on-site problems can soon become a big headache, and can even lead to hefty fines and extended court cases.

Realistically, we know that the construction industry is one where keeping overheads low is essential; but Health & Safety is one area you certainly shouldn't scrimp on. While the up-front cost may be higher, the long-term savings from avoided incidents is more than worth its weight in gold. If you can't afford to pay thousands of pounds in fines up-front, then you need an effective Health & Safety Competent Person Scheme in place to prevent those problems from happening.



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Common Myth:

My Client Will Never Know

Years ago, this may have been the case, but the average modern client knows to do their due diligence when it comes to the contractors they work with. This is doubly so when it comes to local authority work. But whatever your area of construction, clients will check whether you're compliant with Health & Safety; and you could soon find yourself overlooked.

In fact, in some cases, your business may not even be considered for a project if you're unable to prove that you have access to a Competent Person for Health & Safety support. Some clients may also require disclosure of your Health & Safety compliance in a pre-qualification questionnaire, and many clients will check to ensure that you have Health & Safety procedures in place or that you have access to a Competent Person that will allow you to work on their project.

If you want to ensure that your business has no roadblocks when it comes to finding work, joining a Competent Person Scheme is a must. Not only will clients be able to see you comply with their Health & Safety requirements after a vetting process, but they will see your businesses' commitment to properly managing work on their property/project – a win for both sides. There's no disadvantage to being safety-conscious when it comes to your work reputation and the reputation of those you work with.



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Common Myth: All Health & Safety Is Overblown

It can be easy to think 'it will never happen to me' when it comes to accidents in the workplace. We've all sat through mandatory safety training videos and caught glimpses of caution signage, but many construction companies still consider accidents to be a one in a million incident that would never happen on their site. However, more than 1.4 million people were either injured or suffered ill health in the workplace in 2018 alone, according to the HSE.

In 2017-2018 alone, 38 workers were killed on construction sites. Working at height is a particular risk and main cause of workplace fatalities, with 2/3 of accidents occurring on small/medium-sized projects or sites. 31,000 new cases of ill health are logged each year in the construction industry.

While 1.4 million may still be considered by some a low number, it's worth considering the fact that the HSE reported similar incidents costing approximately £15 billion due to ill health and injuries in 2017. When you consider that amount, it's clear to see how costly accidents and incidents can be to your business and just how big a role Health & Safety can play in providing workers, contractors and other staff members with a safe place to work.

If you genuinely believe that Health & Safety should barely be a consideration in the workplace, you may not be prepared if something should go wrong. Having the know-how, insight and backup to help you make the right decisions first-time when it comes to the safety of your workers could make all the difference when it comes to reducing that chance of incidents to zero.



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Common Myth: The Competent Person Scheme Does Nothing For Me

Joining a Health & Safety Competent Person Scheme is just box ticking, right? When it comes to Marpal's Competent Person Scheme, this couldn't be further from the truth.

Our Competent Person Scheme includes everything from a wealth of free information and guidance, to access to countless resources and guides to ensure compliance with every aspect of Health & Safety. We offer insight directly from the experts, and we can be the voice of reason on the other end of the phone, allowing you to make the right choices to keep your workers safe.

Marpal's Competent Person Scheme can be precisely what you make of it. We can provide you with all the information you need, ensure your Health & Safety procedures are all up-to-date, and help you make the necessary changes to be compliant. We save you time, money, and a lot of stress in the long-run.

The Truth: Why a Competent Person Scheme is a **Must** For Your Business

Now we've debunked some of the biggest myths surrounding the appointment of a Health & Safety Competent Person, the truth is if you work in construction - whether as contractors, employees or under any other umbrella - then having access to a Competent Person is no longer optional. For many clients, Health & Safety is a strong consideration in their tendering processes which is why, if you're not compliant, you simply won't be considered.

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The Differences Between Marpal And Other Types Of Competent Person Schemes

According to The Management of Health & Safety Work Regulations 1999 (Regulation 7), every employer must have access to a Competent Person - but when it comes to choosing the right person/company for your construction business, it's important to look at your options carefully.

In the construction industry, you will know that selecting any old materials can often lead to poor quality, and the same is true when it comes to selecting a Competent Person to assist you in your business.

There are general Health & Safety practitioners that provide Health & Safety Competent Person services, but are not specific to any particular industry, instead focusing on Health & Safety in the workplace as a whole. In comparison, Marpal are construction specialists; we work specifically with those within the construction sector, and we have a wealth of experience based on precisely what your employees are doing in the workplace; whether it's a new build, refurbishment, or anything else. Choosing a Competent Person who knows your industry isn't just smart - it gives you access to people who understand the challenges and requirements of working on-site.

At Marpal, we have spent an invaluable amount of time in construction environments. We know the ins and outs and the challenges of a site under construction and we understand the small realities of life on site. It may be tempting to put faith in a Health & Safety practitioner who says all the right things but has never even set foot on a construction site - after all, Competent Person Schemes tend to look very similar at first glance - but knowing what working on a construction site really entails, allows us to identify the types of hazards and risks you may encounter and finetune your procedures.

Marpal's Health & Safety Competent Person Scheme is tailored to the way your company functions, allowing you to continue to complete work to the same high standard, without sacrificing the quality of Health & Safety that your contractors, staff or workers should be entitled to. If you're not currently signed up for a Health & Safety Competent Person Scheme, you should really consider doing so; you may have been fortunate so far, but it only takes one incident to ruin your reputation. To save on fines, keep your staff safe and keep the work coming in, being conscious of Health & Safety isn't optional - it's a must.

"Excellent service from Marpal, helpful and professional from the start. Their Competent Person Scheme provides advice and assistance for all our requirements. Our Company successfully became SMAS Accredited thanks to Marpal."

"Having worked with Marpal, since 2017, I have found them to be very thorough & professional with their approach to Surveys and Assessments. Their knowledge in areas such as fire and asbestos combined with a familiarity of the sector in which we operate has supported our business in achieving a higher level of compliance."

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Ready To Begin The Process Of Health & Safety Compliance?

Contact Marpal today to discuss exactly how we can transform your Health & Safety policies and upgrade your procedures to ensure that you meet the requirements of every job you tender for. We've got the knowledge and insight of the construction industry to supply you with all you need to get accreditation, with none of the hassle.

Forget DIY schemes, injury compensation or HSE fines; with Marpal, Health & Safety has never been easier. Sign up today to join our Health & Safety Competent Person Scheme and discover exactly why so many small businesses choose us to bring their Health & Safety up to scratch. We provide everything you need to succeed, both in protecting your employees and in working with bigger and better clients.

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