

CASE STUDY IAIN WILLIAMS CMIOSH

Practical Safety Management for a Landscaping and Grounds-Maintenance Business

Sector	Food and drink manufacturing
Engagement	Retained competent person support
Workforce	Approximately 17 operational and office employees

A practical health and safety system was developed for a growing landscaping contractor whose activities ranged from routine grounds maintenance to excavation, tree work and hired plant.

Client context

The client delivers hard and soft landscaping, grounds maintenance, tree work and associated construction activities. Its workforce includes office staff and operational teams working at changing client sites, supported by hired-in plant and specialist subcontractors where required.

The challenge

The company needed a consistent system capable of covering a particularly varied risk profile. Activities included excavation and underground services, mini-excavator use, chainsaws and tree work, pesticides and herbicides, welding and fabrication, work at height, manual handling, public protection and the control of subcontractors. Existing arrangements did not give managers and employees one clear set of expectations across all of these activities.

Action taken

Action Safety reviewed the company's activities, workforce structure and current documentation before developing a proportionate health and safety policy and a shorter operational manual for employees. The aim was to separate management-level arrangements from the instructions that employees needed to understand and apply on site.

A structured suite of risk assessments and method statements was developed around the company's actual work. Documents addressed general landscaping, hard landscaping, excavation and underground services, hired-in plant, tree work, pesticides, work equipment, welding and other recurring activities. The documents were designed for project-specific review rather than being treated as generic paperwork.

New-starter induction requirements, staff-development needs and evidence of competence were also considered. This included identifying relevant training for pesticide application, chainsaw use, plant operation, work equipment and other role-specific activities. Contractor assessment, COSHH information and incident support were incorporated into the wider management arrangements.

Key outputs

Company health and safety policy and operational safety manual

Structured suite of task-specific RAMS and safe working procedures

New-starter induction and employee responsibility information

Training and competence recommendations by job role

Contractor, plant-hire and COSHH control arrangements

Ongoing competent-person advice and review support

Outcome and value

The business gained a coherent system that reflected how its teams actually work. Managers received clearer oversight of training, documentation and higher-risk activities, while employees were given more accessible instructions for planning and completing work safely. The retained relationship also provides a route for obtaining advice as new projects, equipment and risks arise, supporting consistent standards as the company continues to develop.