



A film for site operatives

Presented by Ronnie Toms

This is what I like to see, a good canteen, plenty of places to sit, nice and clean and tidy.

First off, I've been in the building trade since I was 16 years old. I started life as a construction engineer's training boy on the M25 and I've watched our industry change a lot in that time and it needed to. We had a really bad reputation back then and well, as you'll see, I've got a few opinions about that.

Of course it's not practical to have something like this on smaller sites but on any site you should have at least somewhere to sit, eat and relax.

Not like the old days is it?

We should get somewhere decent to change too and in fact on bigger sites, somewhere to change and shower, with lockers and more. Nice touch eh?

Lots of people in the building trade have been thinking this way for years and some of them have got together to set up this, the Considerate Constructors Scheme, to improve the industry and to improve the way people outside the industry think about us. When a site signs up, it's not just decent facilities you should expect either.

Site manager or supervisor:

Just let me know and I'll give you a hand to make sure you get everything correct. Everybody okay so far?

We should also get a proper induction onto site too, so we know what's going on, where we get changed, what the safety arrangements are and who the first aiders are.

When we walk around the site we should have safety routes marked like this so we don't accidentally get run over by a truck or fall down a hole. Yeah I know we'd all like to think that we can handle ourselves around a site, but every year there are thousands of accidents and thousands of builders just like you getting hurt.

If there is an accident, after the induction you should all know who the site first aiders are and if it's serious, what to do, who to call and where the nearest hospital is.

Finally, the Scheme's agreed with the industry that everyone working on site deserves proper respect and consideration, both from work mates and the management.

But seriously, we can't expect the Scheme to be all about what we're getting. When they join up, our employers have to agree to what's called the Code of Considerate Practice. This says the environment, the public and our work mates deserve the same respect as we do, and that's the responsibility of everyone who works on site.

It's really not hard is it? And I think it's right. It's just what any of us would want for ourselves, especially if we were living or working near a building site.

The outside of the site is what the public generally sees first. So what would you think if it looked like this? I know what I feel; these people care about what sort of impression their site makes. But there are still too many sites that give a really bad impression and all that says is no one on these sites gives a monkey's about what anyone else thinks.

It's not just how a site looks that gives people the wrong impression. How often do we see this kind of thing?

Blocked pavements or roads, building rubber or waste left all over the shop, site vehicles parked in local residents' spaces, making us walk through clouds of dust because no one has thought about how it feels to be this poor bloke.

And what about the sites that let delivery vehicles block roads or arrive really early in the morning in residential areas and then leave their engines running? I don't know about you, but I don't want a great big diesel wagon running outside my house before I get up.

I know, sometimes we can't help blocking up roads or pavements when there's no other way to get the work done, but we can make sure the diversion signs are clear and people know where it's safe to walk.

Signs like this are just plain daft and annoying!

All this stuff is what the Scheme calls bad practice. It annoys me and it annoys my family and there is no need for it. It just takes a little more thought, a little more consideration. I think we could all do a lot better and we should!

And look, working on site builders get to see the world go by, and we've all got a bit of a reputation for having a laugh at passers-by.

Site operative:

Oi Oi, alright darling!

But if you're the one being shouted or whistled at, it can be pretty scary!

You know, the Considerate Constructors Scheme makes sure there's a number the public can phone on a banner or poster outside every registered site, to tell someone independent about any incident that may have happened.

And the same goes for bad language, in front of colleagues and particularly in front of the public.

There's a few more things in the Considerate Constructors Code that are down to us. Each and every one of us.

If you smoke, you have to pay some respect to non-smokers and only puff away in smoking areas; not in front of the public or hanging around the site entrance, especially when you're wearing branded company kit.

Everyone knows it's a mucky job, so no one expects shiny shoes and pressed jeans, but we shouldn't go into shops or onto public transport or sit in public places to eat lunch, in really dirty or dusty gear. I mean, I don't suppose any of us would like to sit next to this on a train, if it was us dressed for the office.

Music plays

Radios, we all like to listen to a bit of music, but we have to think about the neighbours. If it's loud enough for everyone else to hear, turn it down.

Mobile phones, that's another thing. It's really hard to get by without one nowadays but when we're on site, we need to make sure we use them safely and privately. Certainly not where we shouldn't and definitely never while we're driving plant or using tools.

That reminds me, if there is a near miss of any kind, it has to be reported by whoever sees it, whether it involves people working on site or members of the public.

This is a good example of a system designed for recording near misses. Sites use this kind of thing to improve their safety policies.

Nearly there, then I'll stop my rant, but there's just a few more things that will make it obvious to the public that we're thinking about them and the environment.

For instance, make sure you turn off lights and equipment when you're not using them, and don't waste materials that can be used or recycled rather than going to landfill.

I know I know, it all seems like a pretty long list, but let's face it, it's just plain old common sense, but easy to forget when you're working hard in difficult conditions. But, whenever we can, we need to show the community that everyone working on sites, and that's the managers as well, really does care about them.

I'm proud to be a builder and I think we're far more considerate than we use to be in the bad old days. But we need to keep on improving and we must make sure that the public know we are.

The Considerate Constructors Scheme helps us do both things. It sets high standards, monitors all the member sites and helps share best practice between members, so we all get better.

It seems to me, that's good for everybody.