Glossary

**Accident book**
— required by law under the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979. Even minor accidents need to be recorded by the employer. For the purposes of RIDDOR, hard copy accident books or online records of incidents are just as acceptable.

**Agenda**
— a brief list of topics to be discussed at a meeting, outlining any decisions that need to be made.

**Assembly point**
— an agreed place outside the building to go to if there is an emergency.

**Biocide**
— a chemical substance that can kill living organisms and spores.

**Biodegradable**
— the material will more easily break down when it is no longer needed. This breaking down process is done by micro-organisms.

**Biodiversity**
— wherever there is construction there is a danger that the variety of wildlife and plants could be disturbed or destroyed. Protecting biodiversity ensures that species at risk are conserved.

**Carbon footprint**
— the production of carbon dioxide from burning or using carbon-based fuels, such as petrol, gas, oil and coal. It is not just running a vehicle’s engine but it is also the fuel that is burned while producing materials and equipment.

**Competent**
To be competent an organisation or individual must have:

- sufficient knowledge of the tasks to be undertaken and the risks involved
- the experience and ability to carry out their duties in relation to the project, to recognise their limitations and take appropriate action to prevent harm to those carrying out construction work, or those affected by the work (Source HSE)

**Compression**
— the top beams in a truss are generally under compression. This means there is a pushing force on them.

**Conductive**
— this means that an electrical current can pass through the material and not build up in it.

**Contamination**
— when the water has been polluted by some harmful substance or chemical.

**COSHH**
— the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations are concerned with controlling exposure to hazardous materials.

**Covering letter**
— a very brief, often one-paragraph letter, which states the purpose of the communication and lists any other documents that have been included.

**Creosote**
— a preservative that is commonly used to colour and protect external woods. It is a tar-based preservative. Restrictions on the use of creosote and creosote-treated wood are imposed under the REACH regulation EC No. 1907/2006.

**Dermatitis**
— an inflammation of the skin. The skin will become red and sore, particularly if you scratch the area. A GP should be consulted.

**Dry lining**
— plasterboard is bonded to wall surfaces using the ‘dot and dab’ technique. Dots of plasterboard adhesive are applied to the back of the plasterboard or the wall surface and then the board is pushed onto the wall.

**Finger plates**
— also known as escutcheon plates in domestic dwellings or push plates in commercial jobs. They can be made of wood, metal or ceramic. They are designed to reduce the build-up of fingerprints on a door and the wear and tear on the edge of it.

**Formwork**
— also known as shuttering. It is a temporary structure that supports and shapes wet concrete until it cures and is able to be self-supporting.

**Framing anchor**
— a right-angled metal bracket.
Geothermal
– relating to the internal heat energy of the earth.

HASAWA
– the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act outlines your and your employer’s health and safety responsibilities.

Hazard
– a potential source of harm, injury or ill-health.

Heat sink
– a heat exchanger that transfers heat from one source into a fluid, such as in refrigeration, air-conditioning or the radiator in a car.

HSE
– the Health and Safety Executive, which ensures that health and safety laws are followed.

HVAC
– an abbreviation for ‘heating, ventilation and air-conditioning’. This has been a service provided to many industrial buildings for a number of years, but it is now becoming more common in domestic dwellings, particularly new developments.

Improvement notice
– issued by the HSE if a health or safety issue is found and gives the employer a time limit to make changes to improve health and safety.

Infrastructure
– basic facilities, such as a power supply, a road network and a communication link.

Landfill
– 170 million tons of waste from homes and businesses are generated in England and Wales each year. Much of this has to be taken to a site to be buried.

Leptospirosis
– also known as Weil’s disease. It is spread by touching soil or water contaminated with the urine of wild animals infected with the leptospira bacteria. Symptoms are usually flu-like but in extreme cases it can cause organ failure.

Major injury
– any fractures, amputations, dislocations, loss of sight or other severe injury.

Mark-up
– a builder or building business, just like any other business, needs to make a profit. Mark-up is the difference between the total cost of the job and the price that the customer is asked to pay for the work.

MDF
– an artificial board made using sawdust. MDF stands for medium density fibreboard.

MRMDF
– moisture resistant medium density fibreboard.

Nailed butt joint
– the end of one piece of wood is cut square and butted against the face of another. It is held in place with nails.

Near miss
– any incident, accident or emergency that did not result in an injury but could have done so.

Node point
– where roofing members intersect on a truss.

Non-conductive
– a material that does not readily conduct electricity, and static electricity may build up in the material.

Ordnance Survey Benchmark (OSBM)
– these site datums are usually on public buildings and can be cut into walls.

Organic
– this refers to natural substances, usually extracted from plants.

Over 7-day injury
– an injury that has kept someone away from work for more than seven days.

PAT
– Portable Appliance Testing – regular testing is a health and safety requirement under the Electricity at Work Regulations (1989).

Perpendicular
– this means at right angles or 90°. In regard to roofing, this part of the roof is at right angles to the top of the building and the roof looks like a right-angled triangle.

PPE
– personal protective equipment can include gloves, goggles and hard hats.

Profile
– a temporary frame.

Prohibition notice
– issued by the HSE if a health or safety issue is found and stops all work until the improvements to health and safety have been made.
Reveal
– the sides of the door or window opening.

Risk
– the likelihood that a person may be harmed if they are exposed to a hazard.

Service provider
– companies or organisations that provide utilities, such as gas, water, communications or electricity.

Shear failure
– when the load from the superstructure of the building bears down on the foundation. Underneath the foundation the soil will settle and there could be a failure of the soil to support the foundation. This will cause it to crack and part of the building will sink with it.

Skew nailing
– when a nail is driven into the wood at an angle to hold two pieces of wood in the joint together.

Spreader bar
– ropes or hooks are attached to a bar, which is secured to a banded set of trusses. This spreader bar ensures that the trusses are lifted in a balanced way and no additional pressure or strain is placed on any part of them. The trusses should be lifted at node points.

Sub-contractor
– an individual or group of workers that are directly employed by the contractor.

Tension
– the bottom beams in a truss are generally in tension. This means there is a pulling force acting on them.

Transformer
– an electrical device that converts an electric current from one voltage to another.

Trestle prop
– a frame that allows the vertical storage of trusses. It keeps them off the ground and allows ventilation.

VAT
– value added tax is charged on most goods and services. It is charged by businesses or individuals that have raised invoices in excess of £73,000 per year and is currently 20% of the bill.

Wind
– if something is said to be ‘in wind’ it is twisted. It is pronounced ‘wined’ as in ‘wined and dined’.