

Accreditation: Delivering confidence in the provision of legionella risk assessments

There are many companies that provide consultancy, surveying services, and risk assessments, sometimes at what initially appears to be low cost. However, before commissioning an organisation to undertake such work on your behalf it is important to consider the risks:

- **Are you confident that the organisation has the technical competence to undertake the work in question?**
- **Are you satisfied that the organisation has the resources to do the work?**
- **Are the assessors working to suitable codes of conduct to ensure that the risk assessments are carried out impartially and with integrity?**
- **Are you confident that the organisation has an adequate quality system in place?**
- **Are you satisfied that safeguards are in place, e.g. appropriate liability insurance, in case difficulties arise?**

Under general health and safety law, employers are required to consider the risks from legionella and take suitable precautions. Selecting an organisation accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to carry out your risk assessment will ensure that you are appointing a competent organisation

that will understand and meet your requirements.

The HSE is responsible for enforcing compliance with the regulations and stiff penalties are imposed upon those who fail in their duty of care to ensure the safety of their staff and/or others who could be directly affected.

The UKAS accreditation process determines, in the public interest, the technical competence and integrity of organisations offering testing, inspection, calibration and certification services.

As the nationally appointed accreditation body, UKAS is the only body recognised by Government to assess these types of organisations against internationally recognised standards, and it does so across all market sectors by offering a transparent and consistent approach which builds business and consumer confidence.

It therefore provides an independent and authoritative declaration that the organisation carrying out the risk assessment has the staff, facilities, technical expertise, management systems and track record to undertake the activity professionally and competently.



“It is Government policy to support UKAS accreditation and HSE engages with UKAS regularly to discuss how HSE and UKAS are meeting their obligations. HSE notes the UKAS scheme and acknowledges that it is a positive step in the health and safety management of legionellosis.”

Health and Safety Executive



ISO 9001 is no guarantee of technical competence



It is important to specify the appropriate requirements on suppliers according to the type of work required. You can, for example, be confident in the technical competence of a legionella risk assessment provider if it holds UKAS accreditation to ISO/IEC 17020, the internationally recognised standard that sets out the requirements for organisations performing inspection. UKAS accredited certification of a supplier's management system to ISO 9001 indicates that they have arrangements for managing the quality of their product or service, but doesn't provide any assurance relating to their technical competence.

The Accreditation Process



Accreditation is a rigorous and ongoing assessment to ISO/IEC 17020 (*General criteria for the various types of bodies performing inspection*) and British Standard BS 8580 (*Water Quality – Risk assessments for Legionella control – Code of Practice*) of a legionella risk assessment provider to establish that:

- The organisation is impartial
- The organisation employs technically competent staff
- The organisation has the appropriate resources and facilities
- The organisation is performing to the required standard

The UKAS assessment has been produced to underpin the HSE approved code of practice and guidance document L8 (*Legionnaires' Disease: The Control of Legionella bacteria in water systems*).

Technical Competence



The organisation must demonstrate that individuals carrying out risk assessments are technically competent to do so. This can be demonstrated by means of;

- Qualifications attained
- Internal training
- Routine competence monitoring
- Internal auditing to include witnessed risk assessment performance by a qualified inspector
- Quality control of risk assessments through programme of re-inspecting properties that are representative of all the general types being inspected

Organisation & Management



The organisation must demonstrate that:

- It has appropriate liability insurance
- It operates a Code of Conduct
- It has implemented processes for working safely
- It has a process to manage contract review to ensure that customer requirements are fully understood, the work is adequately resourced and that any deviations to the work are immediately brought to the attention of the client
- It has a complaints process (with referral to UKAS if not satisfied)

Independence, Impartiality and Integrity



The organisation must demonstrate that:

- Risk assessments are carried out independently and impartially. UKAS looks for sufficient safeguards to ensure that links to other bodies do not influence the risk assessment or any subsequent recommendations
- Integrity is being maintained by all staff at all levels through contractual obligation to written codes of conduct. Such safeguards are necessary to ensure that inspections are undertaken with sufficient impartiality and that recommendations are appropriate to given situations.

What are the benefits of using an accredited provider?

- Experienced staff – competence is built on qualifications, knowledge and experience.
- Clear reporting and appropriate recommendations for managing risk
- Impartiality and integrity
- Ability to demonstrate due diligence
- Reduced exposure to insurance claims

A full list of UKAS-accredited providers can be found at www.ukas.com

What are the benefits of becoming accredited?

- Demonstrate your competence to potential customers and the Regulator
- Differentiate your organisation from your competition
- Market access – an increasing number of public and private sector procurers require their suppliers to be accredited
- Reduced insurance premiums – a number of insurance providers have recognised the value of accreditation in managing their assessment of risk. As a result, these providers may offer reduced premiums and increased coverage to accredited businesses.

Applying for accreditation

If your organisation carries out legionella risk assessments and would like to apply for accreditation, further information is available on the UKAS website. Alternatively, please contact Janice Haines, Accreditation Manager, for further information by email at janice.haines@ukas.com



Scan this code to access further information about **applying for accreditation**.



Scan this code to search for an **accredited risk assessor**.



UKAS has formally been appointed as the National Accreditation Body for the United Kingdom under the EU Regulation (No) 765/2008. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) works with UKAS to ensure that it operates in the public interest and meets the obligation imposed by the Regulation.

Further information can be obtained from the HSE and UKAS websites.

Alternatively contact UKAS Corporate Communications:

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Confidence*

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