Risk assessment and method statement (RAMS) for drainage contractors

Starting point: review and adapt it for your job. Part 1 is the risk assessment, with typical hazards for drainage contractors filled in. Part 2 is the method statement.

Client asking for RAMS on every job? The Site Book writes them from a short description of the work. Your first job is free: **thesitebook.co.uk/features/rams**

Company name _____ **Client** _____

Job and site address _____ **Start date and expected duration** _____

Prepared by _____ **Date** _____

Principal contractor (if there is one) _____ **Date of next review** _____

Description of the work

Describe the work this RAMS covers, where it happens and anything about the site that affects how it is done.

Description of the work

Part 1: Risk assessment

List the hazards on this job. For each one, decide who might be harmed and how, how likely it is and how serious it could be.

Can you get rid of the hazard altogether? If not, control the risk so that harm is unlikely. Give collective protective measures priority over individual ones such as PPE.

Typical hazards for drainage contractors, each with the key points from our toolbox talk on it. This is a starting point, not an assessment of your job. Mark which apply to this job, cross out any that do not, and add the hazards this job has that are not listed.

Hazard or topic	Key points and controls to consider	Applies to this job?	Notes for this job
Excavations	• No one should enter an excavation until a competent person has checked it is safe — no ground can be relied on to stand unsupported, whatever the depth • Excavations must be inspected at the start of every shift and after any event that may affect stability (rain, vibration, nearby loading) • Support systems — trench sheets, hydraulic frames, battering — must be designed and installed by competent persons • Underground services (gas, electricity, water, telecoms) must be located and marked before digging starts • Steps must be taken to stop people, vehicles and materials falling in — such as barriers or edge protection, with signs to warn people • Spoil, materials, and plant must be kept well back from the excavation edge to prevent collapse		
Working Near Services	• Before any excavation or ground penetration, obtain up-to-date utility plans from the asset owners and use a cable avoidance tool (CAT) and signal generator (Genny) to locate services • Treat all located services as live until confirmed otherwise by the asset owner • Plan and manage any work within 10 metres of an overhead power line, and keep plant out of a safety zone at least 6 metres from the outermost wire on each side of the line (GS6) • Expose known services with trial holes dug by hand or by vacuum excavation before digging near them, and never use a mechanical excavator within 500mm of a gas pipe • Mark the location of identified services with paint or markers before work begins • Use insulated hand tools (spade, pick) when digging near known electrical cables • Report any damage to underground services immediately, even if apparently minor — gas leaks and cable damage can escalate rapidly		
Confined Spaces	• A confined space is any enclosed or substantially enclosed space where there is a foreseeable risk of serious injury from hazardous conditions — it is defined by risk, not just size • Never enter a confined space without a permit to work and a safe system of work • Atmospheric testing must be carried out before entry and continuously during work • A trained standby person must be stationed at the entry point at all times during work • Emergency rescue arrangements must be in place before anyone enters • Common hazards include toxic gas, oxygen depletion, oxygen enrichment, flammable atmospheres, flooding, and engulfment		

Hazard or topic	Key points and controls to consider	Applies to this job?	Notes for this job
Mobile Plant & Vehicles	• Segregate pedestrians and vehicles wherever possible — use physical barriers, not just signs • All plant operators must be trained, competent and authorised for the machine they are operating — usually shown by a valid CPCS or NPORS card • Avoid reversing where you can and keep people clear. If a vehicle must reverse near people or into a blind spot, use a trained, authorised banksman • Never walk behind or close to moving plant — assume the operator cannot see you • Wear high-visibility clothing at all times in areas where vehicles operate • Mobile plant must be fitted with appropriate safety devices: FOPS, ROPS, mirrors, and reversing aids		
Dust & Silica	• Respirable crystalline silica (RCS) is a very fine dust made when you cut, chase, drill, grind or break materials such as concrete, mortar, brick, block, tile, slate, sandstone and granite • Engineered stone, widely used for kitchen and bathroom worktops, can contain up to 95% crystalline silica. HSE says dry cutting it is unacceptable • The workplace exposure limit (WEL) for RCS is 0.1 mg/m³ (8-hour TWA) — this is a very small amount • Silicosis, lung cancer, and COPD are all linked to silica dust exposure • Control the dust at source first: use on-tool water suppression or on-tool extraction (with an M or H class extraction unit) when you cut, chase, grind or drill these materials. Engineered stone must be cut with on-tool water suppression: extraction on its own is not an alternative • Never dry sweep or use compressed air to clean up dust — use an M or H class vacuum or damp down • RPE is worn on top of water or extraction, not instead of them, because extraction does not capture all the silica. For tasks like chasing, HSE advises RPE with an assigned protection factor (APF) of 20, such as an FFP3 disposable mask or a half mask with a P3 filter • A tight-fitting mask only protects you if it has been face-fit tested to you and you are clean-shaven where it seals against your face • Employers must provide health surveillance where there is a reasonable likelihood of silicosis. Take part when it is offered		
Hand Arm Vibration (HAVS)	• HAVS is caused by regular, frequent use of vibrating hand-held tools such as breakers, grinders, hammer drills, and compactors • Symptoms include tingling, numbness, loss of grip strength, and fingers turning white in cold weather • The Exposure Action Value (EAV) is 2.5 m/s² A(8) — at this point the employer must take action to reduce exposure • The Exposure Limit Value (ELV) is 5 m/s² A(8) — this must not be exceeded • Tool selection matters — low-vibration tools and anti-vibration mounts can dramatically reduce exposure • Early reporting of symptoms is critical — damage is permanent once established		

Hazard or topic	Key points and controls to consider	Applies to this job?	Notes for this job
Temporary Works	• All temporary works must be designed by a competent person and the design checked before loading — by an independent engineer where the works are complex • A Temporary Works Coordinator (TWC) must be appointed for the project to manage the temporary works register and procedures • No temporary works may be loaded until the TWC has confirmed the design check is complete and issued a permit to load • Temporary works must not be struck (removed) without a formal permit to strike issued by the TWC • Premature removal of props, formwork, or shoring is one of the most common causes of structural collapse on site • All temporary works must be regularly inspected by a competent person, with records maintained • Changes to the permanent works design can affect temporary works — always check with the TWC before proceeding		

Record each hazard that applies to this job in the table below, with the controls you will put in place.

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Controls in place	Further action needed	Who	When	Done

Part 2: Method statement

Sequence of work

List the steps in the order the work will be done, from setting up to clearing away. Put the controls for each step next to it.

Step	What will be done	Who	Plant, equipment and materials	Controls for this step
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

People and competence

List who will do the work. Each person needs the skills, knowledge, training and experience for their tasks, or must be in the process of getting them.

Name	Role or trade	Relevant training, qualifications or cards

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE	Needed for which steps

Emergencies

Record the arrangements for any foreseeable emergency, including how to evacuate the site.

First aider _____ **First aid kit location** _____

Nearest A&E (name and address) _____ **Assembly point** _____

How to raise the alarm _____ **Site contact and phone number** _____

If there is serious and imminent danger, workers should stop work immediately, report it and go to a place of safety.

Who workers report danger to _____

Briefing record

Brief everyone doing the work on this RAMS before the work begins. Each person signs to confirm.

Name	Company	Signature	Date

Approval

	Name	Signature	Date
Prepared by			
Approved by			

Based on: HSE's five steps to managing risk; the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, regulation 3 and Schedule 1; CDM 2015, regulations 15 and 30; HSE guidance L153. The typical hazards and key points are from The Site Book's toolbox talks on each topic, at thesitebook.co.uk/toolbox-talks.

- HSE, Managing risks and risk assessment at work: steps needed to manage risk: https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/steps-needed-to-manage-risk.htm
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, regulation 3: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/regulation/3
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Schedule 1: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/schedule/1
- CDM 2015, regulation 15: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/51/regulation/15
- CDM 2015, regulation 30: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/51/regulation/30
- HSE, Managing health and safety in construction (L153): https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l153.htm

Starting-point template from The Site Book, October 2026. Review and adapt it for the actual job and site before anyone works to it.