Demolition Safety Toolbox Talk

Key points, do's and don'ts, and questions with answers. The attendance sign-off sheet is on the last page.

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Key points to cover

- Demolition work must be planned and carried out to prevent danger, with the arrangements recorded in writing before work begins — this is a specific legal requirement under CDM 2015 Regulation 20
- A written demolition method statement must be prepared before work begins, detailing the sequence, plant, exclusion zones, and emergency procedures
- A pre-demolition survey must identify all hazards including asbestos, structural condition, live services, and adjacent structures
- All services (gas, electricity, water, telecoms) must be identified, isolated, and confirmed dead before demolition begins
- Exclusion zones must be established and maintained to protect workers and the public from falling materials
- Dust, noise, and vibration must be controlled — demolition generates significant quantities of all three
- Asbestos-containing materials must be identified and, so far as reasonably practicable, removed before demolition begins — by a licensed contractor where the work is licensable

Do's and don'ts

Do

- Ensure a written demolition method statement is prepared by a competent person before any work begins
- Complete a Refurbishment and Demolition asbestos survey and remove all asbestos before demolition starts
- Confirm all services are isolated and dead before starting demolition — obtain written confirmation from asset owners
- Establish and enforce exclusion zones around the demolition area to protect workers and the public
- Use dust suppression measures (water sprays, damping down) to control airborne dust

Don't

- Never start demolition without a written method statement reviewed and approved by a competent person
- Never demolish a structure without first completing an asbestos survey — disturbing asbestos can be fatal
- Never undermine or remove structural elements out of the planned sequence — premature collapse kills
- Never allow unauthorised persons into the demolition exclusion zone
- Never assume services are dead — obtain written isolation certificates from the asset owner

Questions to check understanding

Ask each question and let the crew answer before you read out the answer.

Q1. What does CDM 2015 Regulation 20 specifically require for demolition work?

Answer: CDM 2015 Regulation 20 requires that the demolition or dismantling of a structure is planned and carried out in such a manner as to prevent danger, or where it is not practicable to prevent it, to reduce danger to as low a level as is reasonably practicable. The arrangements must be recorded in writing (a demolition plan or method statement) before work begins. This plan should address the sequence of demolition, the methods and plant to be used, exclusion zones, and emergency procedures.

Q2. Why must a Refurbishment and Demolition asbestos survey be completed before demolition?

Answer: A Refurbishment and Demolition (R&D) survey is required under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 to locate and identify all asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) within the structure before any intrusive work begins. Demolition can disturb hidden ACMs in areas such as floor tiles, insulation boards, roof sheets, pipe lagging, and behind wall linings. Inhaling asbestos fibres causes mesothelioma and asbestosis — diseases that are fatal and have no cure. So far as reasonably practicable, all ACMs must be removed before demolition work begins — by a licensed asbestos removal contractor where the work is licensable.

Q3. What should be included in a demolition method statement?

Answer: A demolition method statement should include: the details and condition of the structure; the results of pre-demolition surveys (structural, asbestos, services); the planned sequence and method of demolition; the plant and equipment to be used; arrangements for service isolation; exclusion zones and their boundaries; measures to protect adjacent structures and the public; dust, noise, and vibration control measures; emergency and rescue procedures; competency requirements for the demolition team; and welfare and environmental protection arrangements.

Attendance sign-off sheet: Demolition Safety Toolbox Talk

Everyone who attended prints their name and signs to confirm they received this talk.

Date _____ **Time** _____

Site or location _____ **Presented by** _____

No.	Name (print)	Company	Signature
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Presenter's signature _____

This is general guidance for UK construction sites. Check it against your own risk assessment, method statement and the site before you deliver it. Toolbox talk from The Site Book, reviewed 26 October 2026. Read it online at thesitebook.co.uk/toolbox-talks/demolition.