



YOUR GUIDE TO  
**PROTECTING YOUR PROJECT**  
FROM  
**START TO FINISH**



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This is a quick guide of how to protect Yourself and Your Project, no matter if you are doing an Extension, Renovation, Conversion or a New Build.

Unfortunately, most of the critical aspects of the building work are outside of your control, but three things that can easily be done to reduce the Risks are:

- 1) Make sure that you have the right Insurance cover from the start – Site Insurance and where applicable, Structural Warranties.
- 2) Written Contracts are a must and should be in place before anything commences - to ensure you end up with the dream home and not another building nightmare so that even when things do go wrong they can be remedied swiftly.
- 3) Whilst we understand there is an extra expense involved and most self-builders work 'backwards' in their budgeting, perhaps consider taking on a 'qualified' Project Manager as it will usually save you more than it costs and will probably deliver your project on time without too many sleepless nights!

## **BEFORE YOU START**

### **Purchasing a Plot**

You will have received Form TA6 from your solicitor. Read it thoroughly. There may be issues such as Restrictive Covenants, Defective Titles, Contamination or Invasive Plants and it may be possible that the risks are insurable. A Public Liability Policy is a 'must have'. Even though the land may be Vacant or Unoccupied, those walking or entering your site with or without your permission could have an accident. Even if you are not directly liable you may still need to defend against an action - which can be very expensive. There are several ways you can cover this:-

For New Builds most people buy plots where there is at least outline planning - minimising delays before the works commence. However, as you will have many things to think about at the same time you should consider being proactive and purchase a package that will cover your project from the start to save remembering to buy a separate Land Owners Liability, separate Public Liability policy and then Contractors/Site policy.....and at the right time.

Self-Build Zone's Comprehensive Site Insurance package includes Public and Employers Liability and is available in 3/6/9/12 month policies (or longer if needed) to make sure you have the right cover in place until you've completed your project.

Consider a Structural Warranty policy carefully even for Extensions and Conversions. Anyone purchasing your House in the following 10 years may well require it. Plan this before you start the work as it can cost you a lot more if you purchase a Warranty after works have started.

## DURING THE BUILD

### \*Contracts

### \* Structural Warranty

### \*Site Insurance

### \* Building Control & Surveys

So now you are ready to commence the project. Your Site Insurance should be in place to cover the new works and any existing structures BUT be sure to check the Sums Insured are adequate. Your lender would have informed you about the need for a 10 Year Structural Warranty but even if you aren't using a lender it is worth considering if there is the slightest chance of selling the house in the next 10 years.

## Contracts

All Professionals, Trades, Suppliers, Contractors etc. should be tied down with written and signed contracts. Any Variations to the contracts should also be noted and agreed using the appropriate form. 90% of all Legal Expense claims are for Breach of Contract but without Contracts in writing how are you going to prove what was agreed? You need to be compliant with the CDM Regulations 2015 with regards to Contracts.

Self-Build Zone can supply you with a comprehensive suite of Legal Templates specifically drawn up for Self-Builders by ContractStore and for less than a solicitor would charge just for one. Claims then become much easier with the written Contract and a simple Claim Form being required.

## Structural Warranty

### **MOST LENDERS INSIST ON YOU HAVING A 10 YEAR STRUCTURAL WARRANTY AS A CONDITION OF THE LOAN**

Even if you have NO mortgage you should still have a 10 Year Structural Warranty because if you want to sell in the next 10 years then the Purchaser or their Lender will want to see one ...

Retrospective Warranties (warranties issued after the project has commenced/been completed) can be VERY expensive and be subject to costly surveys.

## Building Control & Surveys (Build-Zone Survey Services)

Building Control is about compliance with Building Regulations and a Technical Audit is to satisfy the Insurers that it meets their requirements. Using Local Authority Building Control is NOT compulsory. If you are getting a Structural Warranty Self-Build Zone can take care of the Building Control aspect with our partnered Approved Inspectors AND at the same time carry out Technical Audits for the Warranty Providers – saving YOU time and money with fewer visits but also usually the same surveyor familiar with your Project.

We believe the Technical Audit process should be embraced and looked at positively and more importantly as another line of defence against things going badly wrong as they should be regularly on-site. The sooner that people engage with the appointed Building Control Body / Inspector the better. You will soon find that you have enough to worry about when the project commences.

### **Why BZSS**

The recommended Approved Inspectors must agree to our Consultancy Agreements and produce proper and meaningful reports to our specific standard, all of which are checked by BZSS.

### **Extension or Renovations**

If you are doing an Extension or Conversion you must make sure you have insurance in place for the 'Existing Structure' as well as for New Works.

### **WHY?**

Home Insurance is not designed to cover New Works or Existing Structure whilst works are being carried out. In a recent survey 55% of people carrying out structural works did not advise their Insurers beforehand – meaning they effectively had no cover. For example if there had been a Fire they could have lost everything. It is possible to suspend or cancel your Home Insurance if your current Insurance Company will not cover the works in progress. You then purchase the Self-Build Zone Site Insurance which will also include cover for the 'Existing Buildings' as well as the 'New Works' to be undertaken. When the works are complete you revert to standard Home Insurance.

### **Do's and Don'ts of protecting a Project**

1. Make sure you research your Trades and Building Professionals. Go and see some of their projects.
2. Make sure you have a clear Contract with all of them in writing!
3. Remember to note any changes in contract or agreed terms in the self-build contract suite.
4. The majority of claims on building projects are essentially due to lack of proper Project Management during the build.
5. DON'T USE AN UNRATED INSURER. Many warranty providers have gone bust like Alpha A/S recently leaving their customers without warranties and no protection meaning they are having to pay for a second warranty after completion. This could have been avoided by using an "A" rated insurer.
6. Check your Contractor's (original) Insurance documents. Don't assume they have the necessary insurance. It may be limited to their own work only. Lots may remain uncovered.
7. Arrange your Structural Warranty before you start.
8. Combine your Building Control and Technical Audits through a BZSS partnered Approved Inspector.
9. Always have a Contingency fund. Budget for and expect additional costs!