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# Element 1: Identifying task requirements

## Overview

Determining and clarifying task requirements is an important skill in the construction industry which impacts on the successful management of people, resources and budget. In order to complete job tasks successfully you need to know exactly what is required of you, how to locate information about your job and how to get the assistance you require if necessary.

Communication is the key factor to finding out what you need to know. Listening to instructions and asking questions ensures you understand your task requirements. Advice and mentoring from more experienced colleagues is also useful. However, there are times when you'll need to source the information yourself. This may require you to access information from manufacturers, work sheets, drawings and online sources to ensure that correct interpretations of the task and material requirements are achieved.

Planning or prior preparation also assists in the smooth completion of tasks at work. Find out what is required of you in advance and read information or ask questions about the task in order to plan ahead for the task.

## Learning outcomes

You need to demonstrate competency in the following areas:

Section 1.1 Determining and clarifying task requirements

## Section 1.1: Determining and clarifying task requirements

A significant factor in the successful completion of any work task is accurately determining exactly what it is you are required to do. It is worth clarifying the requirements upfront in order to minimise delays and wastage due to errors. You can use a variety of communication methods to identify exactly what your work task involves. Some communication tips include:

- Listen carefully to your supervisor at daily planning meetings (or kick-off meetings) to ensure you fully understand what is required of you. You will also be provided with information about other sub-contractors' requirements and how work arrangements are scheduled so tasks are completed in a logical and efficient manner.
- Ask questions to check you understand the required tasks or to clarify points you are uncertain of. Your direct supervisor will appreciate you clarifying aspects you are unsure of instead of proceeding and wasting time, resources and money through making errors. Sometimes it may be necessary to use a two-way radio or phone to speak to your supervisor if they are not close by.
- Read all instructions, plans, specifications and drawings, job sheets and other relevant documentation as this provides further clarification about the task and what you are expected to do.
- Use any visual cues. Your supervisor can inform you of any formal visual cues, safety or warning signs that you need to be aware of, especially where loud equipment may be operating. Pay particular attention to this information as each work place might have unique cues that are used on site.
- Use technology such as a mobile phone or computer to assist if your supervisor is not available. Companies may provide fact sheets or information about using their products. Product labels and advertising information may provide a phone number or website address that might be a good source of information. A two-way radio may also be useful to request assistance from more experienced colleagues or supervisors.



Misinterpreting information in the construction industry can be very costly in terms of time, money and safety. Your attitude and communication skills with co-workers, sub-contractors, suppliers and the client's representatives are a major factor in the success of your job. Always make sure that you choose the most appropriate communication method for each situation and take into consideration cultural, technological, safety and environmental factors.

Clear communication, good organisation and prior preparation will ensure that you do your job well and avoid costly mistakes or injury.

Make sure you are familiar with any specifications, plans and drawings so that the quality of your work is to the required standard and you will be less likely to misinterpret information as you work. If you know what your task will be ahead of time you can prepare yourself by reading relevant documents or discussing the task with your co-workers. Being familiar with task methods and required resources before you begin a task will cut down on time spent learning on the job.

Safety and environmental protection issues are an essential element to any work carried out on a construction site. Make sure you are familiar with safety and environmental requirements prior to undertaking any task and plan your task stages with this in mind.

## Find out more

Resource	Why it is useful
Buy Two Way Radios <i>Two way radios for construction</i> <a href="http://www.buytwowayradios.com/cat/2-way-radios/guide/business/use/construction.aspx">www.buytwowayradios.com/cat/2-way-radios/guide/business/use/construction.aspx</a>	This web page provides information about using two way radios in construction work, including detailed specifications for different brands and models.
MiTek Australia Ltd <i>Home of gang-nail building systems</i> <a href="http://www.mii.com.au">www.mii.com.au</a>	This website provides information and freely downloadable information about products, work methods and safety information for the construction industry.

### Section task 1.1

1. List the five main communication methods that can be used to determine, confirm and clarify task requirements.
2. Describe how prior preparation can assist you to accurately interpret specifications and requirements of a job task.

## In ACTION

### Graham's story

While working on the high-rise apartment project, Graham needs to ensure arrangements are in place for the delivery of concrete for the flooring of the first-level apartments. Graham looks over the tasks that have to be completed prior to the arrival of the concrete. He does this to ensure the safe application of the concrete into the formwork structure and makes a few notes about outstanding tasks and the time frames each require. Graham notices the formwork team have a lot to do in order to be ready for the concrete pouring. He makes a note to discuss this with the team leader at the pre-start meeting or before if possible.



The concrete has been ordered for 1.30 pm that day. This leaves enough time in the afternoon to finish the concrete surfacing. The concrete will have Sunday to continue to cure and strengthen. It is important everything is completed in preparation for the arrival of the concrete, in order for work to continue next week, once the concrete is hard enough to walk on.

Graham makes a few quick calculations about the allocated time for each task and finds he needs to check the progress of some of these with his co-workers. He speaks with his co-workers prior to the pre-start meeting to ensure they can complete their tasks in the required time. Graham also spends time with the formwork team to resolve the outstanding work issues. They decide to add two extra workers to the team to help finish the task in time.

Once Graham has allocated the tasks and how long they each require, he calls a meeting to discuss the plan and inform everyone about the requirements for the 1.30 pm arrival of the concrete. At the pre-start meeting Graham's co-workers have a few questions about which area of the concreting will be commenced first. They also discuss what activities they can then work on while the concrete is being poured.

The concrete truck arrives at 1.00 pm and Graham meets with the driver to organise where the concrete is to be poured first and sequentially after that. Graham gives the concrete delivery driver instructions about where he can and cannot be on the work site for safety reasons. He checks the invoice for details requested in the order to ensure the concrete meets the specifications they require. Graham knows it is important to do this prior to pouring the concrete as it would be a costly mistake to pour the wrong mixture or quantity of concrete. Graham completes the required documentation and places it in the folder in the site office.

Once the concrete has been poured Graham makes an entry into the site progress folder. He makes specific mention of the project progress made by the formwork and concrete finishing teams. He also makes notes about how long it takes the concrete to set in certain areas and when those areas will be safe enough for people to resume working on them.

## Revision

- Pre-start meetings provide an opportunity to organise work activities and coordinate these with co-workers and other contractors.
- The organisation of work activities and completion of relevant project documentation saves time, money and resources through efficient work practices.
- Liaising and communicating with others to organise work ensures safer working arrangements for all.
- Project progression depends on the successful completion of tasks in order of priority.

- Completing the required documentation is an essential form of communication on a construction site.
- Each contractor has their own documentation requirements and workers are informed of these at induction.

## **Are you ready?**

Use this checklist to assess if you are ready for assessment activity 3.

I understand how to:

- ☐ Organise work activity
- ☐ Complete and record necessary documentation

## Assessment activity 3

### Organising work

The following table maps the assessment activity for this chapter against the element and performance criteria of Element 3 in *CPCCCM1013A Plan and organise work*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
Whole activity	3	3.1, 3.2

In the table below construct a work sequence plan for yourself based on a typical day on the job. Record consultation with co-workers about their projects and how their work may impact on yours or how your work impacts on their tasks.

If you are not currently working in the construction industry, you may develop a work sequence plan for Graham from the 'In ACTION' story about concreting the multi-level apartments.

Work sequence plan			
Task	Time required	Impact of co-workers tasks on your work	How your work impacts on others

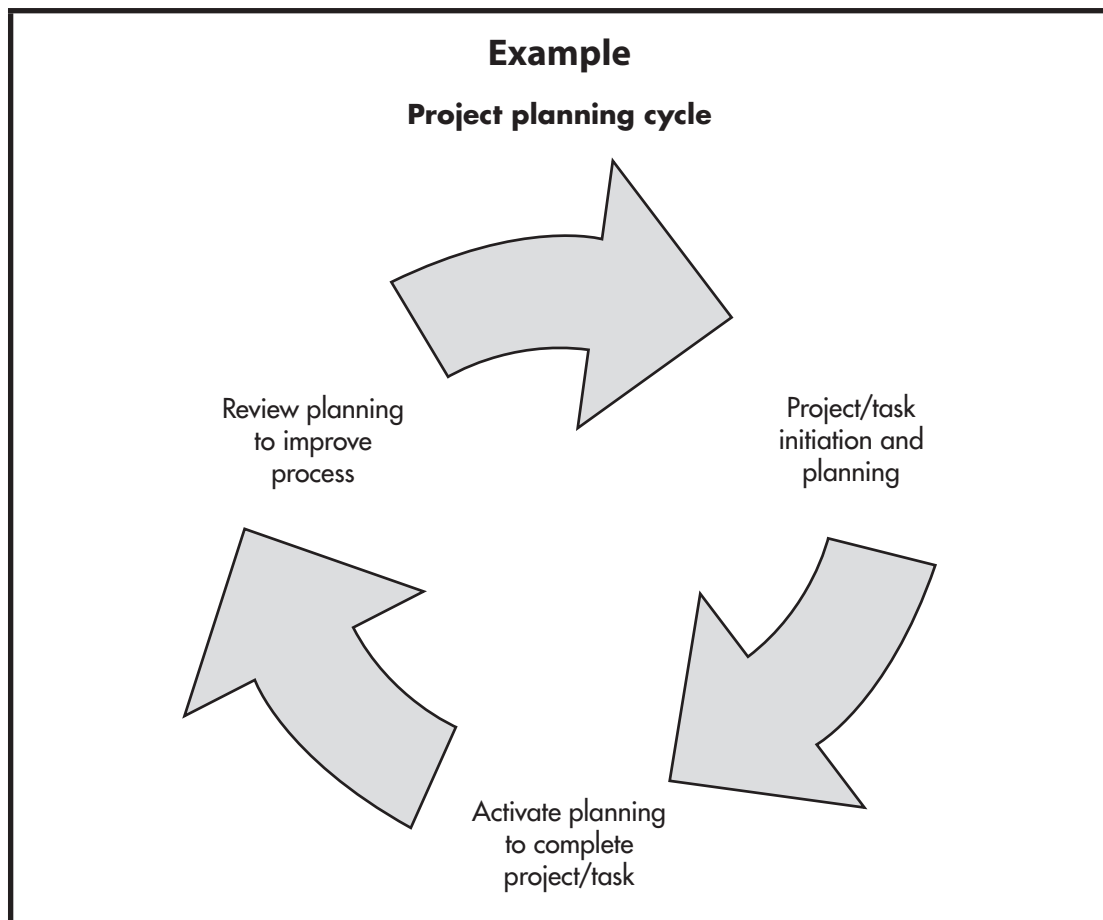
### Record your employability skills

When you have completed the assessment activity, make sure you record the employability skills you have developed in the table at the end of the learner guide. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills.

## Section 4.1: Reviewing the planning and organising of work activities

Quality project management requires that time and effort is put into reviewing the planning and organising process to see where efficiencies can be improved.

The following example shows the cyclical nature of planning, task completion and review. Each phase is dependent upon the other and with regular review, will result in process improvement.



On a construction site the planning and organisation of work occurs on many levels. The site manager plans activities based on what has to happen first. For example, what has to be completed before the next task can begin. Each day these goals are broken down further into sub-tasks which are discussed at pre-start meetings. Organising teams and resources to complete tasks is an ongoing process that needs to be flexible to allow for contingencies.

Reviewing the process is traditionally undertaken at the completion of the project; however, smaller reviews may be necessary throughout the project as more information is available. For example, if a supplier cannot get an order of materials to site on time then the manager has to review the priorities and reschedule tasks to accommodate the changed delivery schedule. The process is reviewed with respect to identifying another supplier or allowing more lead time for the order to ensure materials arrive on time. These decisions impact the planning and organisation for the next project leading to improvements such as better time and resource management.



Usually the site manager reviews the project planning and organisation process but the team should assist the review through discussions at the conclusion of each phase; some issues may briefly be discussed at pre-start meetings. Individuals can also review their own work activities in order to recognise improvements that can be made in their own work practices. This may mean making adjustments to daily work plans or task procedures and should be discussed with the supervisor.

Reviewing the organisation and planning of work activities can be undertaken to check various factors at the workplace. For example, reviews may focus on:

- safety issues and audits
- environmental protection requirements and work practices
- quality assurance procedures
- adopting new technologies
- time efficiencies
- cost effectiveness with resources
- team composition.

Once efficiencies have been identified, the information is then fed back into the planning process and future activities reflect the new process. The review process helps to establish an environment of continuous improvement. This is beneficial not only for the site manager but also for the client, workers and environment. The entire team should be involved in the review of planning and organising work activities. This ensures a holistic view of the process and enables more informed feedback.

## Find out more

Resource	Why it is useful
Project Perfect <i>Project quality planning</i> <a href="http://www.projectperfect.com.au/info_project_quality_planning.php">www.projectperfect.com.au/info_project_quality_planning.php</a>	This web page provides information on quality plans, what quality means and how to measure project quality planning.
Method 123 <i>Project management life cycle</i> <a href="http://www.method123.com/project-lifecycle.php">www.method123.com/project-lifecycle.php</a>	This web page provides information on project management life cycles and how to complete each task.

### Section task 4.1

1. Explain how the different stages of the planning cycle are interrelated.
2. List two areas that may be identified as requiring improvement in a task or project process review. Explain how these could impact future planning and why this would be desirable.