



A3C Management

SAFETY | QUALITY | ENGINEERING

The predictable should never be a surprise

A3C CASE STUDY

TODAY'S QUALITY IS TOMORROW'S SAFETY

(A short case study proving that it's better to ask than to overstep your authority)





TODAY'S QUALITY IS TOMORROW'S SAFETY

SCENARIO

Large construction project on a nuclear licensed site. The whole build was subject to a three sign off process for quality assurance purposes. A pitched roof constructed 3 stories up covering the main building section was constructed to agreed and signed off design drawings and materials.

Finished and signed off by the roofing company, the design scaffold and safe access was removed. That's when the problem started:

WHAT SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED – THE QUALITY ASSURANCE BIT:

Aside from the roofing company doing what they were paid to do and sticking to the design rather than deciding it was over designed and cost saving on the fixings, is that the inspection should have been conducted prior to scaffold removal. That would have highlighted the issue, the roofing company brought back (at their own expense) and the roof finished to design, inspected and signed off. Scaffold removed; mile-stone payment made. All happy, move on.

What did happen – not in line with Quality assurance processes:

The client and third-party inspectors looked at the roof from an adjacent building and raised an issue around fixings. In short there were only about half of the amount detailed on the design. So, no sign off, no milestone payment and certainly no possibility of concession. The client was not happy.

You can imagine the atmosphere in the project management room – blue is the polite way to put it. Why, simply put the roof wasn't finished. Not only did it not have the required fixings, but it wasn't signed off. The roof had no safe access to it. The roofing company were off site.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT – THE SAFETY ISSUE BIT:

Client procedures only allow for roof access through fixed measures such as scaffold. To erect the design scaffold would cost around £100k for the duration of the work and result in additional costs due to delayed works on the side of the building where the scaffold





was located. Alternative was to erect an access scaffold from a flat roof at the rear of the building and find a roof access and traverse system that allowed the work to be carried out safely and that would convince the client (remember this is a nuclear licensed site) that the risks were minimal.

The project opted for the latter; the client mandated the former. Stalemate. The safety team put together the whole plan from purchase of equipment, training and installation, post use maintenance plan, risk assessments and resulting controls. Pitched at the client, against the ensuing delays the go ahead was given.

Roofing company recalled, trained on the access system that was basically a set of install as you go anchor points and the roof completed along with photographic evidence for inspector sign off.

RESULT

– COST AND INCREASED RISK:

Work at height is constantly listed as a high-risk activity. It could have been avoided.

Financial cost to the roofing company who were not paid to rectify the issue they left.

Reputational cost to; client with their third party inspectors, the principal contractor with the client, the roofing company with everyone.

Loss of confidence in all parties to manage contractors and the quality assurance system.

In fact, the only people that came out well were the safety team. Being honest though, it was work that we could have done without.

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