

APS BRIEFING

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEMPORARY WORKS

Based on a presentation by Philip Baker, delivered as part of our Spring 2025 Webinar Series.

Recommended for: Clients, Principal Designers, Contractors, Site Managers, Engineers, Temporary Works Coordinators & Supervisors.

Overview

Temporary works are an essential but often under-recognised part of construction. They support safety, buildability, and cost control across all stages of project delivery. In a recent expert-led webinar, Philip Baker provided practical insights into Temporary Works coordination, shared case studies of success and failure, and unpacked the implications of the latest updates to **BS 5975:2024**.

This briefing note captures the key messages and guidance from the session. Whether or not you attended, it offers valuable information to help ensure Temporary Works on your projects are managed effectively, legally, and safely.

What Are Temporary Works?

Temporary works are described in the British Standard as "engineered solutions" used to:

- Support or protect existing structures or permanent works during construction
- Support excavation sides or slopes
- Provide access or segregate plant, vehicles, and people
- Support heavy plant, scaffolds, or services
- Manage hydraulic or geotechnical effects during works

They are safety and business critical. Even though they do not contribute to the strength of the finished structures, failures in Temporary Works can result in serious injury, fatality, project delays, and financial penalties, either from the courts or from clients. Their failure can also impact on neighbouring structures and members of the public.

Temporary Works are present on nearly every activity on all sites, from small-scale domestic works to major infrastructure projects. Yet many people still claim, incorrectly, that their project involves no Temporary Works.

BS 5975:2024 Update

The British Standard containing industry good practice around the procedural control of Temporary Works and Temporary Works design has now been revised and split into two parts:

- BS 5975 Part 1: Management procedures for the control of Temporary Works (Code of Practice)
- BS 5975 Part 2: Design and implementation of falsework (Code of Practice)

What You Need to Know:

- Clause numbers **have changed**, with former clauses 2 and 3 merged
- Updates must be reflected in your Temporary Works **procedures, training materials, and audits**
- New clause references impact all project documentation
- The principles of Temporary Works management remain largely the same, but
- Some subclauses have been added or consolidated
- Design responsibilities are clarified in Part 2

Immediate Action: Update your internal systems to reflect the new standard and ensure staff are conversant with the changes.

Roles & Responsibilities

Clients:

- Must consider Temporary Works early, even before tender
- Should ensure that all appointed designers and contractors are Temporary Works competent
- Can use the Temporary Works Forum Information Sheet 13 to add relevant TW questions to pre-qualification processes

Principal Designers (PD):

- Must address TW within Pre-Construction Information (PCI), especially risks that are "difficult to manage" resulting in the need for Temporary Works
- Have duties under CDM to support all designers, including TW Designers
- Should ensure residual risks, including Temporary Works risks, are communicated to contractors

Principal Contractors (PC):

- Must appoint a Temporary Works Coordinator (TWC) and, where desirable, other TWCs and Temporary Works Supervisor(s) (TWS)
- Need to develop and follow a clear Temporary Works procedure, including:
 - Temporary Works Register
 - Design briefs
 - Design and design check
 - Permit to load/unload
 - Monitoring during use
- Must record any Temporary Works left in place (e.g. sheet piles) in **the Health & Safety File**

Designers (incl. Temporary Works Designers):

- Must be aware that Temporary Works Designers are CDM Designers
- Required to identify, reduce, or control risks in their designs
- Should coordinate with PDs and Permanent Works Designers (PWDs)

Case Studies: When It Goes Wrong

1. Gypsy Patch Lane Rail Bridge

Context: Bridge deck move using SPMTs (Self-Propelled Modular Transporters)

Issue: Contractor omitted a surface topping layer to save £100k

Outcome: Deck (4,900 tonnes) sank in saturated stone, resulting in axle failures, a 10-month delay, and £2m cost

Lesson: Short-term savings can lead to major cost and significant schedule disruption

2. Trench Collapse Fatality

Context: Tier 1 contractor laying ducts in narrow road

Issue: Design planned for wider trench; site changed to different line and narrower trench due to presence of newts

Outcome: Agency worker killed in collapse after unsupported excavation and deeper digging

Root Cause: Possibly poor ecological information in PCI led to uncontrolled design changes

Lesson: PCI must include project specific risk information

3. Colmore Circus

Context: Tall building created increased wind at ground level

Issue: As-cladding progressed and ply sheets blown off hoarding

Outcome: Serious and lasting injury to member of the public resulting in compensation payout

Lesson: All Temporary Works, including that 'hiding in plain sight', must be properly considered for the whole of the duration of the site works and inspections need to be carried out and lessons learnt when things go wrong

Practical Insights

Use the Temporary Works Process Flow:

- 1.Appointment(s)
- 2.Temporary Works Register
- 3.Design brief
- 4.Design & Check
- 5.Permit to Load
- 6.Monitor use
- 7.Permit to Unload
- 8.Feed into H&S File

- Temporary Works left in place (e.g. sheet piles, filled voids) **must be recorded** if they present a residual risk that may affect subsequent design and works
- **Don't assume scaffold handover = permit to load**
- Site managers, scaffolders, and chargehands often act as de facto Temporary Works Supervisors but may lack appropriate skills, knowledge and experience
- **Training is essential** – BS 5975-1:2024 defines five examples of how the SKE needed for those managing temporary works might be acquired and evidenced

Takeaway Actions

- Update your Temporary Works procedures to reflect BS 5975:2024
- Audit internally to ensure that people understand the changes that have been briefed out and that the procedures remain fit for purpose
- Ensure TW Designers are treated as CDM Designers and supported appropriately
- Revisit your Pre-Construction Information templates and compare them against **Clause 12.2.4 of BS 5975 Part 1:2024**
- Ensure all Temporary Works left in place are documented in the H&S File
- Watch the full webinar for extended case studies and deeper insight

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEMPORARY WORKS

Watch the Webinar

Philip Baker shares over 40 years of experience, illustrated with real project examples, practical breakdowns of Temporary Works failures, and a clear overview of BS 5975-1:2024.

► Watch on-demand now: [Practical Considerations for Temporary Works Management](#)





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