# Plasterboard

## The Essential Ingredients to Safer Handling

### Introduction

Handling and installing plasterboard can present significant risks of developing musculoskeletal problems. MSD injuries from handling plasterboard do not usually occur because of a 'one-off' lift. The injuries usually arise from repeated poor lifting practices and posture during the handling and installation of boards. It is difficult to eliminate all of the lifting and carrying risks associated with installing plasterboard panels. This makes it very important to adopt the correct control strategies. This guidance illustrates some of the measures that can help reduce risk.

### Key Outputs

- Plasterboard handling should be considered at the earliest opportunity and for maximum impact and risk reduction, through design and specification.
- All duty holders (Designers, Principal Contractors and Contractors) should ensure that they co-operate and engage, so that measures introduced to reduce and control risk are embedded in the agreed working methods.
- Safety in the handling of plasterboard starts with delivery to site and ends when all boards are fixed and waste is removed from each plot, and therefore measures to be adopted should address each stage of the plasterboard journey.
- Planning in simple measures such as ‘slots’ in floors and ‘ramps’ to access points can help improve postures and reduce stresses of carrying.
- The use of mechanical aids, selection of working platforms, requirements for team lifting and safe stacking and storage should be specified within written methods of work.

### Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Manual Handling Operations Regs 1992



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## Visual task Briefing for Installers

| **Plan It** to ensure that everyone knows what's expected and what they need to do | |
|---|---|
| • Plan for delivery and off-loading to suit the build programme, the availability and suitability of equipment (e.g., lorry crane, forklift, telescopic handler, mobile crane, or other handling devices etc.) site constraints and the pallet, stacking or packaging limitations. |  |
| • Plot readiness, cleaned out and dimensionally accurate |  |
| • Access to work area and through door access prepared |  |



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|---|---|
| • Plasterboard on site and weather protected |   |
| • Fixings available, hop ups and tools in tip top condition and stable (height to base ratio) |  |



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|---|---|
| • Review the plot to check if the correct noggins are in place to carry ceiling boards |  |
| • Consider how is plasterboard it to be moved? |  |
| • Any plant or assistance (team lifting) required depending on weight of board? |   |



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| **Deliver It** to the plot in the right location with easy access convenience to entrance doors | |
|---|---|
| Forklift handling to plot, right orientation, space to access and move |  |
| • Clear laydown free of trip hazards, |  |
| • Ramped access to front door |  |



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|---|---|
| • Adequacy of passage through storage areas and scaffold |  |



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<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Move It into and around the plot utilising best options for ease</td></tr>
<tr><td>

- Clear empty plot

</td><td> 

 </td></tr>
<tr><td>

- Staircase suitability – stairwell protection must remain in place at all times.

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</table>



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|---|---|
| • Plasterboard letterboxes to be utilised |  |
| • Count the boards so minimise additional movement |  |
| • Good handling techniques, consider team lifting if board weight dictates |   |



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|---|---|
| • Use trolleys when possible |  |
| • Design in letterbox, (protect when not in use) and/or |  |
| • Design in access slot in studwork at top of stairs |  |



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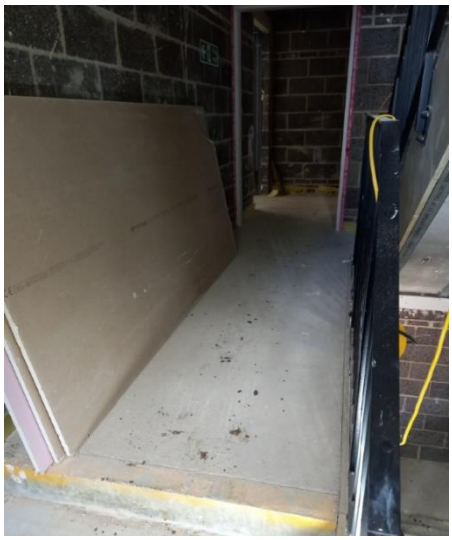
<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Stack It for stability and ease of handling without overloading floors</td></tr>
<tr><td>

- On its side against a wall and at an angle for stability

</td><td> 

 </td></tr>
<tr><td>

- Limit numbers for stability, ‘suction effects’ and overloading

</td><td>  </td></tr>
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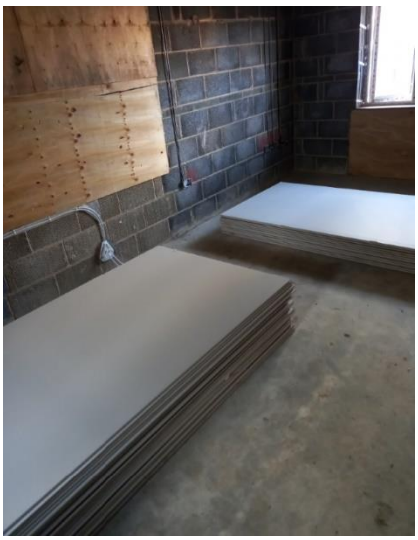
|---|---|
| • Use a securing device when there is a risk of falling |  |
| • On its back and paper side up for ease of cutting |  |
| • On trestles or supports to improve handling heights |  |



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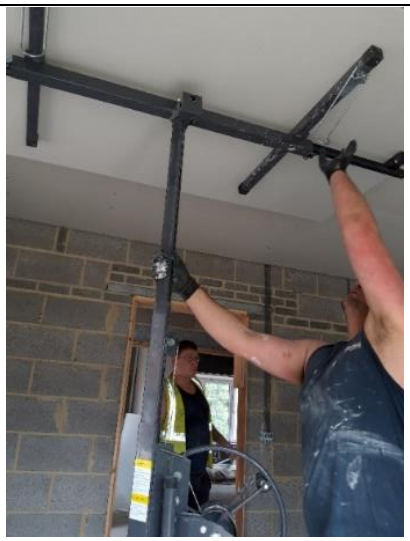
|---|---|
| • Store off cuts |  |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Fix It** by cutting to size with good knife technique, use assistance for ceiling boards, use a sturdy hop up | |
| • Sharp knife, change blades frequently, gloved hand |   |
| • Two man working above head or get a proprietary lifter |  |



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|---|---|
| • Proprietary hop ups, sturdy, in good working order and with adequate SWL |  |
| • Proprietary working platforms in good working order |  |
| • Work area kept clear with waste removed regularly |  |



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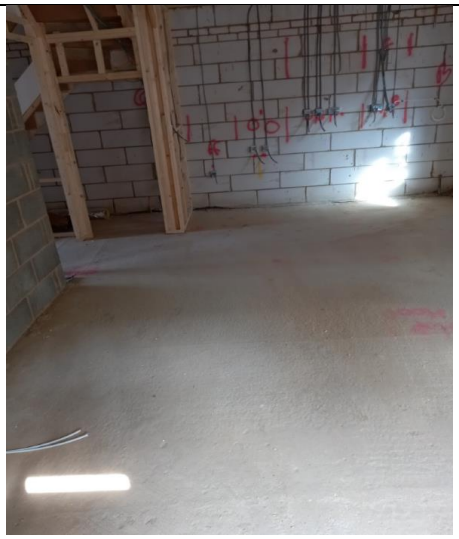
## Visual task Briefing for Site Managers & Supervisors

| **Plan It** to ensure that everyone knows what's expected and what they need to do | |
|---|---|
| • Plan for delivery and off-loading to suit the build programme, the availability and suitability of equipment (e.g. lorry crane, forklift, telescopic handler, mobile crane, or other handling devices etc.) site constraints and the pallet, stacking or packaging limitations. |  |
| • Plot readiness, cleaned out and dimensionally accurate |  |
| • Coordination with other trades and external works |  |



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|---|---|
| |  |
| • Plasterboard on site, suitable size and weather protected |  |



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|---|---|
| • Review the work area to ensure that stairwell protection rails are in place |  <br>  |
| • Is a plasterboard letterbox opening required? (winding stairs) |  |



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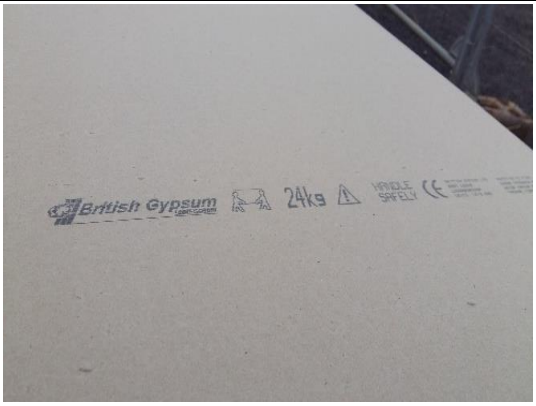
|---|---|
| • Scaffolding adaptions required to the front door openings for loading out? |  |
| • Plasterboard weight to be marked on board/packs |  |
| • Remove all hazards from works area |  |



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|---|---|
| • Access ramp installed to front door or 'best' access point (e.g. patio doors) |  |

| **Deliver It** to the plot in the right location with easy access convenience to entrance doors | |
|---|---|
| • Instruct forklift handling to plot, right orientation. Use a banksman if the load obscures vision |  |
| • Ensure clear laydown free of trip hazards, trenches, obstructions |  |



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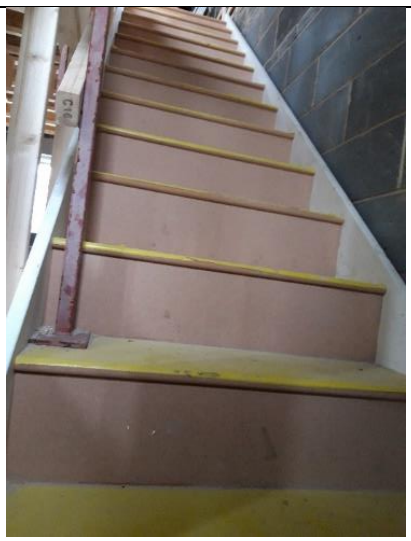
| **Move It** into and around the plot utilising best options for ease | |
|---|---|
| • Ensure clear empty plot and additional timber noggins to prevent falls on open stairwells |  |
| • Staircase suitability is okay for straight loading |   |



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|---|---|
| • Plasterboard letter boxes installed and free from services (electric/plumbing) |  |
| • Ensure installers know limit of floor loading and seek temporary works guidance when required |  |

**Fix It** by cutting to size with good knife technique, use assistance for ceiling boards, use a sturdy hop up

| | |
|---|---|
| • Ensure correct techniques and safe systems of work identified in the contractors RAMS are followed |  |



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| • Work at height equipment suitable & sufficient and erected correctly. |  |
| • Right equipment in use and in good condition and properly erected /installed |  |
| • Ensure tipping skips are available for waste material |  |



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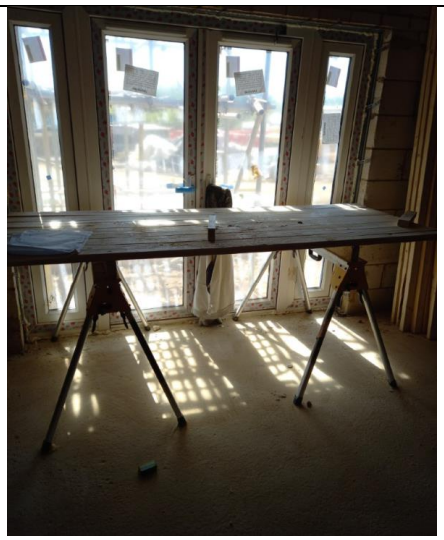
|---|---|
| • Job rotation |  |
| • Lightweight fixing tools |  |
| • Cut boards on trestles. Avoid cutting boards that are stood on edge |  |



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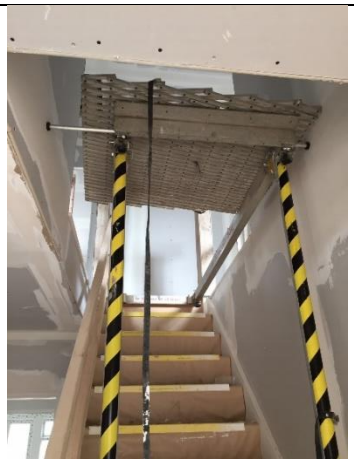
## Visual task Briefing for Designers & Specifiers

| **Plan It** to ensure that everyone knows what's expected and what they need to do | |
|---|---|
| • Material specification identified in tender documentation and trade specifications provided to subcontractors |  |
| • Allowance in the prelims for the use of lifting accessories, temporary access platforms in stairwells and provision of loading bays on apartment schemes |  |
| • Take off accurate and materials available |  |



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|---|---|
| • Avoid confusion by reducing type of boards for various locations |  |
| • Allow for standard board sizes to suit room heights |  |
| • Consider narrow/lighter boards for ceilings |  |
| • Plan sequencing to obtain better access and where possible mechanical loading out |  |



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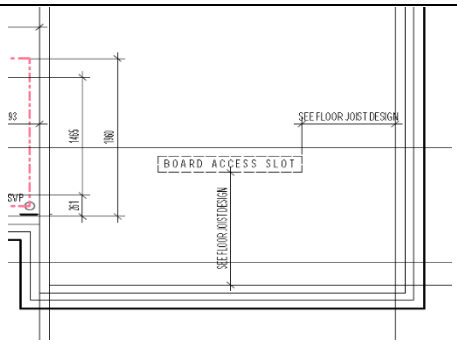
| | |
|---|---|
| • Plan for delivery and off-loading to suit the build programme, the availability and suitability of equipment (e.g. lorry crane, forklift, telescopic handler, mobile crane, or other handling devices etc.) site constraints and the pallet, stacking or packaging limitations. |  |
| • Design in best position access slots |  |
| • Box in slots with designed floor joists for strength and rigidity |  |
| • Identify any loading restrictions on floors including temporary works for structural support |  |



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| **Deliver It** to the plot in the right location with easy access convenience to entrance doors | |
|---|---|
| • Consider availability of forklift handling to plot, reach and loadings, pallet size |  |
| • Consider general site material storage requirements |  |
| • Protection from weather impact vital |  |



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|---|---|
| • Just in time delivery |  |
| • Use of trolleys when possible (apartments) |  |
| • Specify any floor loading restrictions or locations |  |



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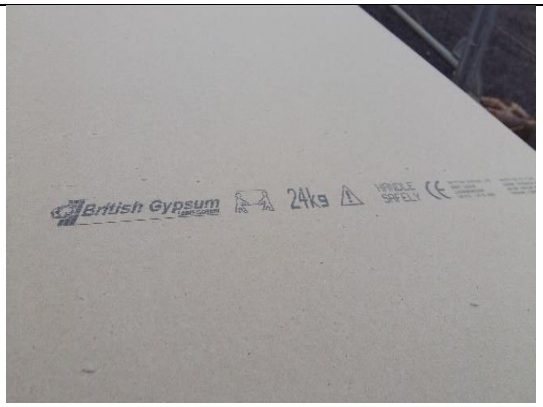
| **Move It** into and around the plot utilising best options for ease | |
|---|---|
| • Right size boards for room heights |  |
| • Smaller boards/lighter on ceilings….. no board heavier than 25kg |  |
| • Staircase suitability or/and floor slots for each plot |  |



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|---|---|
| |  |
| • Location of services to facilitate use of letterboxes |  |
| • Trolleys |  |



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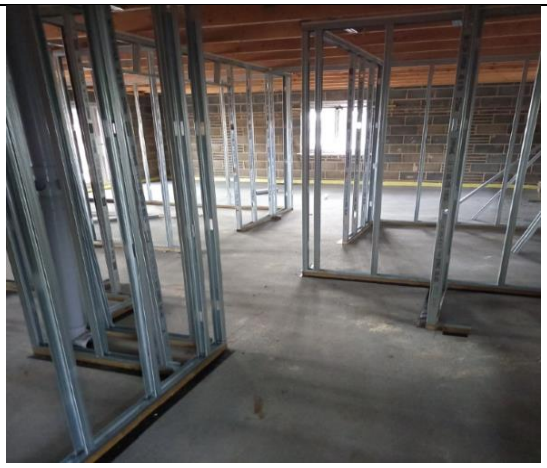
<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Fix It by cutting to size with good knife technique, use assistance for ceiling boards, use a sturdy hop up</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Fixing in accordance with manufacturers specification</td><td> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Studwork wall suitability (plumb and straight) and centres</td><td>  </td></tr>
<tr><td>• First fix electrics/plumbing</td><td>  </td></tr>
</table>



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| • Type of insulation and associated installation methodology |  |
| • Job rotation |  |
| • Use lightweight fixing tools |  |



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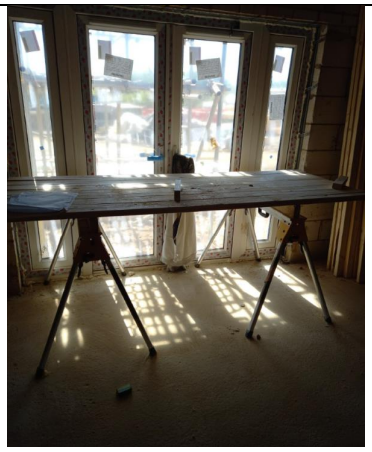
| • Cut boards on trestles and avoid cutting boards that are stood on edge. |  |



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