

Safety Accreditation Made Simple:

Your SME Guide to CHAS, SafeContractor & PQS

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What is a Safety Accreditation?

Safety accreditations are formal recognitions that your business complies with specific health and safety standards. They show you're serious about maintaining a safe, compliant working environment—crucial for legal obligations, employee wellbeing, and client confidence.

For SMEs, accreditations such as **CHAS**, **SafeContractor**, and **PQS** open doors to larger contracts and partnerships. These schemes are often mandatory in public sector or construction-related work. Without them, you're likely to be passed over during tender evaluations—even if you're fully capable.

More than just a tick-box exercise, these accreditations create a **structured, safety-first culture** across your operations. From senior leadership to front-line workers, everyone benefits from clear policies and expectations. They also improve onboarding, audit readiness, and reduce insurance costs.

CHAS (Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme)

CHAS certifies your organisation meets essential health and safety standards. It reduces the need for multiple assessments and boosts your credibility with local authorities and construction firms.

It's ideal for SMEs seeking growth, offering recognition that you're a low-risk, reliable contractor. CHAS also simplifies the pre-qualification process for tenders and reduces admin time.

By holding CHAS, you're showcasing **your leadership in compliance**, signalling that you're ready for larger responsibilities and contracts that require professional safety governance.

SafeContractor

SafeContractor goes beyond health and safety, incorporating **environmental responsibility, equality, and ethical standards**. It's widely accepted across multiple sectors including education, healthcare, and manufacturing.

Being SafeContractor accredited positions your business as forward-thinking and trustworthy. It tells clients you're committed to managing risk, promoting sustainability, and treating people fairly.

This accreditation also comes with access to a supplier platform, where you can get noticed by procurement teams across the UK actively looking for accredited contractors.

PQS (Pre-Qualification Scheme)

PQS is an **SSIP-accredited scheme** designed for speed, simplicity, and affordability. It's a great choice for SMEs that want to stand out without excessive red tape.

PQS lets you **reuse your assessment across multiple clients**, saving time and stress. It's ideal if you're bidding for work in several industries and want to avoid duplicate paperwork.

It also offers valuable support and reminders, helping you stay compliant year after year without the admin burden.

Why Do You Need a Safety Accreditation?

1. Legal Compliance

Accreditations help demonstrate compliance with the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** and other UK regulations. You're showing that health and safety is part of your everyday practice—not just paperwork.

2. Tendering & Client Requirements

Most local councils, Tier 1 contractors, and corporate clients require one or more accreditations before doing business with you. Not having one may block you from bidding altogether.

3. Professional Image

Accreditations show professionalism and accountability. They make you stand out, reduce objections during sales, and enhance your brand's reputation.

4. Stronger Teams

When your workforce sees that you've invested in accreditation, it builds confidence and trust. It tells staff they're working for a business that values their wellbeing.

5. Insurance & Risk Reduction

Accreditation can reduce your insurance premiums by showing your risk is being actively managed, which in turn makes you more attractive to underwriters.

Specific Requirements of CHAS, SafeContractor & PQS

All schemes typically require the following:

-  Health & Safety Policy
-  Risk Assessments & Method Statements (RAMS)
-  Training Records & Certifications
-  Accident & Incident Reporting Procedures
-  Evidence of Monitoring & Review
-  Employer's & Public Liability Insurance
-  Subcontractor Vetting
-  Emergency Procedures & First Aid Arrangements

Each scheme may also request information on:

-  Equality & Diversity Policies
-  Environmental Responsibility
-  Equipment Maintenance Logs
-  Proof of Past Projects

Staying compliant means maintaining **clear documentation**, **regular reviews**, and keeping up with **training renewals**.

Preparation for Accreditation

1. **Start With a Gap Analysis**
Compare what's required vs. what you already have. Don't just guess—use the self-assessment checklist (below) or get support from a professional consultant.
 2. **Update and Organise Documentation**
Your policies should reflect current operations. No copy-paste templates! RAMS should be job-specific and include hazard controls.
 3. **Train Your Team**
Make sure all staff are trained, competent, and aware of emergency protocols. Keep training logs up to date and accessible.
 4. **Involve Management**
Senior leadership must be engaged. A culture of safety starts at the top. Accrediting bodies often ask how leadership is involved in monitoring safety.
 5. **Plan Ahead**
Applications can take 2–6 weeks. Don't leave it until the last minute, especially if your accreditation is required for a specific contract deadline.
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Common Problems Businesses Face

 **Generic Policies:** Templates not customised to your actual work processes can lead to automatic rejections.

 **Missing Training Records:** Expired or undocumented training is a red flag to assessors.

 **Poor Communication:** If your staff don't know your policies, you'll struggle during interviews or audits.

 **Disorganised Paperwork:** If you can't find your documents, assessors will assume you're not actually using them.

 **Pro Tip:** Simulate an audit! Have someone else review your evidence and ask typical assessor questions.

Self-Assessment Checklist

Use this to see if you're ready to apply:

- ☐ Health & Safety Policy updated this year
- ☐ RAMS tailored to current activities
- ☐ All staff have completed relevant training
- ☐ Induction process in place
- ☐ Incident reporting system in use
- ☐ Insurance documents current & stored
- ☐ Fire & emergency plans in place
- ☐ Policies on environment, equality, and ethics
- ☐ Evidence of subcontractor checks

 **If you checked 7 or more:** You're close!

 **Fewer than 7?** Let's talk—we can help you fill the gaps.

Further Info & How We Can Help

SJH Safety Solutions offers a **personal, affordable service** tailored for UK SMEs. Whether you need help preparing for your first application or managing renewals, we've got your back.

We offer:

- ✓ Document review & creation
- ✓ Mock audits
- ✓ Accreditation application support
- ✓ Ongoing compliance services

FREE 30-minute Consultation

We'll review your readiness and provide honest advice—no obligation, no jargon.

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Let's get you accredited and growing with confidence.  