

Introduction

This British Standard was first published in 1982. It reflected the recommendations of the Bragg Report [2] and used, as the main reference document during the drafting stages, the report on falsework by the Joint Committee of the Concrete Society and the Institution of Structural Engineers [3]. These two reports were published in the 1970s following a number of significant collapses and an apparent lack of authoritative guidance.

The standard drew together all those aspects that need to be considered when preparing a falsework design using permissible stress methods, and in so doing included recommendations for materials, design and work on site. Because the success of temporary works is closely tied up with its management, this British Standard describes procedures as well as technical aspects. The standard provides guidance on the accuracy of construction required in order to be able to adopt the recommended design approaches.

Recommendations are given on the actions that ought to be taken and possible ways of allocating the duties to individuals. The Bragg Report [2] recommended that the duty of ensuring that all the relevant procedures and checks are carried out be given to one individual in the construction organization, such an individual being known as the “temporary works co-ordinator”. BS 5975:1982 endorsed such action, but adopted the narrower term “falsework co-ordinator”, because the procedures section of the standard did not consider the other activities covered by the general term temporary works, such as scaffolding and excavations. The 2008 edition, incorporating procedures for all temporary works, reverted to the term “temporary works co-ordinator”.

At the time of publication of the Bragg Report [2] the construction industry was very different from the industry we know today. Health and safety legislation was just beginning to bring improvements on sites. There was little sub-contracting of construction work and most trades were carried out by the main contractor's operatives.

Today very little construction work is carried out by the main contractor, now known as the principal contractor (PC), and in relation to health and safety legislation, the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM) [1] recognize the various contractors and sub-contractors which might be on site. The CDM Regulations require whoever appoints the PC, contractor or sub-contractor to check that the organization is competent to do the work. The organizations which are appointed also need to plan, manage and monitor their own work.

This philosophy was taken into account during this revision of BS 5975, to keep it aligned with health and safety legislation, and allow the contractors and sub-contractors to plan, manage and monitor their own work if they have the skills, knowledge, experience and organizational capability. The PC has overall responsibility for work on site and in keeping with the recommendations in the Bragg Report [2], the PC's temporary works co-ordinator (PC's TWC) has overall responsibility for all temporary works on the site, including those of contractors appointed by the client. With this in mind, procedures specific to other organizations, such as clients, designers, contractors and sub-contractors, and other roles have been introduced whilst ensuring responsibility is traceable from the PC's TWC to the PC's temporary works DI to the PC's board of directors.

The Bragg Report [2] made recommendations about courses on civil engineering, which B/514/26, the committee responsible for this British Standard, believe to be as relevant today as when they were written. This standard therefore endorses the Bragg Report recommendations.