

Major Works — A Guide for RMC Directors

Planning, procuring and managing major works in residential blocks

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INTRODUCTION

Major works are one of the most significant responsibilities facing RMC directors. Whether it is a roof replacement, external redecoration, lift renewal or structural repair, major works projects require careful planning, statutory compliance and transparent communication with leaseholders.

WHAT ARE MAJOR WORKS?

Major works are works where the contribution from any one leaseholder exceeds £250. Works above this threshold trigger the statutory Section 20 consultation process. Common examples include roof replacement, external redecoration, lift renewal, window replacement, structural repairs, communal heating system replacement and entry system upgrades.

Planning Major Works

CONDITION SURVEYS

Best practice is to commission a periodic condition survey of the building, ideally every three to five years. A condition survey carried out by a qualified building surveyor will identify existing defects, predict future maintenance requirements and provide a basis for reserve fund planning.

RESERVE FUND PLANNING

Major works should ideally be funded partly or wholly from the development's reserve fund. If insufficient, a special levy may be required. RMC directors should take legal advice before issuing any special levy to ensure it is recoverable under the lease.

The Section 20 Consultation Process

WHY COMPLIANCE IS ESSENTIAL

Failure to follow the Section 20 consultation process limits recovery to £250 per leaseholder regardless of actual costs. For a development of 20 flats, this could mean recovering only £5,000 against a £200,000 roof replacement — leaving the RMC severely out of pocket.

Stage	Requirement	Timescale
1 — Notice of Intention	Describe proposed works, invite contractor nominations and written observations from leaseholders	30 day consultation period
2 — Statement of Estimates	Provide at least 2 estimates; include nominated contractor estimate if applicable	30 day consultation period
3 — Award of Contract	If cheapest or nominated contractor not selected, serve written reasons on all leaseholders	Within 21 days of award

All notices must be served on each leaseholder individually and on any recognised tenants association.

Appointing Contractors and Consultants

USING A CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR

For significant major works, appoint a qualified building surveyor or contract administrator. Their role includes: preparing a detailed specification of works, obtaining competitive tenders, evaluating tenders and making recommendations, administering the building contract, certifying interim and final payments, managing variations, and inspecting works on site.

CONTRACTOR DUE DILIGENCE

- Company registration and financial stability
- Relevant trade memberships and accreditations
- Public liability insurance (minimum £5m recommended)
- References from recent comparable projects
- Health and safety policy and risk assessment procedures

During and After the Works

COMMUNICATION DURING THE CONTRACT

Keep leaseholders informed throughout the works programme with regular updates. Advise leaseholders of access requirements, noise and disruption periods, and any changes to the programme.

DEFECTS LIABILITY PERIOD

Most building contracts include a defects liability period (typically 12 months) during which the contractor must return and remedy any defects that emerge following practical completion. Ensure all defects are logged and notified to the contractor within the liability period.

FINANCIAL RECONCILIATION

Following completion of major works, the service charge accounts should be reconciled to show the total project cost, amounts drawn from the reserve fund, and any balance owing by or to leaseholders. This reconciliation should be included in the annual service charge accounts.

HOW BERGASON CAN HELP

Bergason Property Services Limited manages major works projects from inception to completion, including Section 20 consultation, contractor procurement, contract administration and leaseholder communication. Contact us: 0121 384 1333 | info@bergason.co.uk