

How to Pass SSIP Assessment in 2026: A Practical Guide for FM Suppliers

3 hours ago



Demonstrating health and safety competence has become essential for suppliers working in the construction and facilities management sectors. For many, that means achieving SSIP certification – but understanding what assessors are looking for can make the difference between a successful application and unnecessary delays.

[SSIP \(Safety Schemes in Procurement\)](#) brings together a number of recognised health and safety assessment schemes under one umbrella. The key advantage is mutual recognition: once a supplier passes an SSIP assessment through a member scheme, all other registered member schemes will recognise that assessment, reducing duplication and speeding up procurement.

For FM suppliers, this translates into tangible business benefits. Many principal contractors and major buyers require SSIP certification as part of their pre-qualification process. Without it, suppliers often find themselves repeatedly answering the same questions, submitting identical policies and completing multiple assessments for different clients.

SSIP certification demonstrates that organisations meet core health and safety standards aligned with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations. It reduces administrative burden, saves time and money, and signals professionalism to prospective clients.

But achieving certification requires careful preparation across five key areas.

Foundation: The Health and Safety Policy

A compliant health and safety policy is the foundation of any successful SSIP application and one of the first documents that assessors review.

For many small and medium-sized businesses, the challenge isn't having a policy at all – it's ensuring that it is relevant, current and properly structured. Assessors expect to see three sections: a statement of intent signed by senior management, clear organisation and responsibilities identifying who manages safety at every level, and practical arrangements explaining how safety is managed day-to-day through risk assessments, training and monitoring.

One of the most common issues is submitting generic templates that don't reflect the work the company actually performs. A company that is being assessed needs an appropriate policy that relates directly to its activities. The policy needs to be reviewed at least once a year and updating as required, demonstrating active management rather than engaging in a one-off exercise.

Risk Assessments and Method Statements

Risk assessments are among the most important elements of demonstrating health and safety competence during SSIP assessment. They show that organisations understand the hazards associated with their work and have taken practical steps to control them.

A typical risk assessment identifies the hazards, who could be harmed, the level of risk and the control measures used to reduce that risk. For higher-risk activities, these assessments are often supported by method statements explaining how work will be carried out safely.

Crucially, assessments must reflect the type of work the organisation performs. For example, roofing contractors should provide assessments which include working at height; maintenance companies may need electrical safety controls; cleaning contractors will require COSHH assessments for chemicals – included within their risk assessment documents.

Risk assessments don't need to be long or complex. What matters is that hazards are clearly identified and control measures are realistic and practical.

Training and Workforce Competence

Even the best procedures are only effective if workers understand how to apply them. Training and competence form key elements of the SSIP Core Criteria.

During assessment, suppliers must provide evidence that workers have the skills and knowledge required for their roles. This includes training records, certificates or qualifications, industry competence cards and records of refresher training.

A common difficulty for SMEs is that training has taken place but no formal records exist. The assessment process requires evidence, so maintaining clear documentation is essential. Many companies now use simple training matrices to track staff qualifications and renewal dates.

Training should relate directly to the organisation's activities – working at height training, manual handling, equipment operation or electrical safety awareness, depending on the work performed.

Accident Reporting and Monitoring

A strong safety culture involves not just preventing incidents but learning from them. During SSIP assessment, suppliers must demonstrate how accidents and near misses are recorded and reviewed.

The assessment process will look at evidence that organisations record accidents and near misses, investigate incidents where appropriate, identify lessons learned and take steps to prevent recurrence.

Monitoring incidents helps identify trends and potential weaknesses. For example, repeated manual handling injuries may highlight the need for additional training or improved equipment.

For many SMEs, the process can be straightforward: an incident form, investigation notes and corrective actions. What matters is that the process is consistent and documented.

Managing Subcontractors Safely

Many contractors rely on subcontractors to deliver specialist services, which means ensuring those subcontractors meet appropriate health and safety standards.

Before appointing subcontractors, organisations should confirm competence by reviewing qualifications and training, experience and references, health and safety procedures and relevant certifications. Subcontractors should be informed of site rules, safety procedures and any specific project risks.

Competence checks shouldn't stop once work begins. Supervising subcontractors and ensuring they follow agreed procedures is essential to maintaining safe working practices.

During SSIP assessment, demonstrating that subcontractors are selected carefully and monitored appropriately shows a mature and responsible approach to safety management.

Preparing for Success

Focusing on these five areas – health and safety policy, risk assessments, training and competence, accident reporting, and subcontractor management – will support the assessment process, ultimately enabling supplier to approach an SSIP assessment with greater confidence.

The SSIP Core Criteria provide the framework against which all member schemes assess supplier competence. Understanding what assessors are looking for and preparing documentation accordingly helps suppliers avoid unnecessary delays and demonstrate the professional standards that clients expect.

For FM suppliers competing in an increasingly regulated environment, SSIP certification isn't just about compliance – it's about demonstrating capability, opening doors to new opportunities and building trust with major buyers who need assurance that their supply chains meet rigorous health and safety standards.