

you don't need to plan to get there but if kit needs to be ordered do plan when and how you will do this. Plans usually have five components. First, decide what to order (e.g. what size fuse box is needed? does it come with a suitable cover and what are the connectors like – do you need a special fitting?). Next plan for any tools you need, particularly if the work needs specialist equipment. Thirdly, list the jobs you need to do and put them in a sensible sequence. Estimate how long each part of the work will take. Fourth, list any extra help you will need – is there anyone you need to contact? When are they available? Finally plan for approvals you need – does someone need to check your work?

- Make sure your plan is detailed and clear. Include any kit and tools you need, create a sequence and schedule for the individual tasks and make sure you have the necessary approval to switch the system on.

How do you fancy a useful list?

Plans can be quite complex with lots of things to take and do on the day. It's easy to forget something and that stops work completely. Alongside your plan a checklist of kit is useful – you can tick items off as you put them into bag or van. Also think about anything you need to do before the day (e.g. phoning in advance to get access to the site) it can be listed and ticked off as you do it. When you finish the job review your list – did you forget to put something on it? Add it to the list so that next time you do a similar job it's already on there.

- Make sure you do not rely just on your memory – a list to check things off as you do them is useful. Keep and update your lists – eventually they will become just part of your memory but at first, they are a great support.

What about Health and Safety issues?

Health and Safety can also be seen as an afterthought. This is a mistake. Workers who do not take H&S seriously are a danger to themselves and their colleagues. Make sure that you have any necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (you may have to order this specially for some jobs and can only use it once) and are clear about the procedures you will use – don't expect to muddle through when you're onsite! Many employers will not even let you start work unless you can show you have thought about H&S and are qualified to work safely.

- Make sure you think about H&S before you start working. Order any safety equipment you need and make sure you know how to use it properly. Unsafe or careless workers are a danger to themselves and others.



Check yourself

You should be able to answer these questions easily after reading this sheet.

1. Why plan every job – even the simple, familiar ones?
2. How can a simple list prevent a work stoppage?
3. List the five parts of a successful plan.



Taking it further

These activities will deepen your understanding of this topic.

1. Think of a project you would like to do. Prepare an outline plan for it. Think about:
 - what you want to do (the Aim).
 - what kit and materials you need and when you will need them.
 - the sequence of tasks and the rough time needed for each one.
 - any support or approval you will need before the system can go live.
 - any Health and Safety issues – what PPE will you need and are you qualified to use it?
2. Draw up a form you could use for planning. Include boxes or spaces where you can write in the things particular to each job. Create the form on a computer and then print it out and trial it with your next job. A hint – keep the form to a single side of A4 ... if it spreads onto the next page you'd be surprised how often people forget to turn it over and fill it in!
3. How could planning have prevented these conversations?

'I thought you'd brought the sprawl deflator ...'

'How could I know the place was closed on Tuesday?'

'No, I've not brought my Gas Fitter Qualification certificate with me ...'

'Ah, you've got the Model A. We don't use that any more as the Model D has replaced it. I'll need to get some special connections for this job ...'

'No-one told me the thermostat was in the middle of a cage for rattlesnakes!'