

Skanska billed £28,000 by employee blacklist firm

Nick Mathiason

Sun 24 May 2009 00.01 BST

Skanska, the Scandinavian construction group, appears to have bought more information from a controversial company at the heart of union blacklisting claims than any other building firm operating in the UK.

Documents seen by the Observer suggest that the largest invoice sent out by the Consulting Association, which is facing prosecution for allegedly operating a construction workers' blacklist, went to Skanska.

It is believed this list was used by construction firms to avoid employing "troublesome workers" who were often members of unions or had raised concerns about health and safety issues.

Invoices from the Consulting Association appear to show that in 2008, one division of Skanska spent £28,122.60 on top of a £3,000 annual subscription. It has been reported that searches of the list cost £2.20 a time; if the Skanska invoice is related to such checks, it could mean that the construction firm had made thousands of inquiries.

The government is to outlaw the use of covert blacklists that prevent trade unionists from getting work after the Information Commissioner's Office exposed widespread blacklisting in the construction industry this year.

"Skanska has taken the allegations of its involvement with the Consulting Association very seriously, and does not condone or support such behaviour, which is against the values and behaviours of the company," the company said in a statement. "When the involvement of Skanska was brought to the management team's attention, we immediately launched an internal investigation into the matter. These investigations continue and Skanska will ensure that it identifies its involvement and will take action as necessary."

On Wednesday, Ian Kerr of the Consulting Association will go on trial under the Data Protection Act.

● This is the archive of The Observer up until 21/04/2025. The Observer is now owned and operated by Tortoise Media.

Most viewed