

Permit to work systems

Guidance Note 12
Sep 23

Permits to work systems

Introduction

This Guidance Note gives practical information about permit to work systems.

A sample template has been included in Appendix 1. If you wish to use this template to construct your own documents, you must ensure that all references to **Alcumus SafeContractor Certification** have been removed and the final documents are clearly incorporated into your existing safety management system.

A permit to work (PTW) is a formal written safety control system that is implemented to help prevent accident or injury to personnel, prevent damage to plant/machinery and to prevent damage to a product or to a client site. This is, in particular, required when the work has foreseeable high risk content. The operation of a permit to work system is particularly useful when contractors are on site i.e. for maintenance or installation purposes. The aim of a permit to work system is to remove both unsafe conditions and human error by imposing a formal system which requires formal action.

Typical areas / work activities that should be covered by a permit include:

- Hot works
- Roof works
- Confined spaces
- High Voltage electrical work
- Asbestos
- Excavation works
- Lift works
- Pressure systems
- Demolition works
- Work on scaffold towers, mobile elevated working platforms (MEWPs)
- Work in isolated locations, or areas with difficult access or those at high levels.
- Work in the proximity of, or involving, explosives or highly flammable substances.

Work involving contractors in any of the above activities on or about your premises

Key Points

- Any person in control of a premises could be required to enforce the use of a Permit to Work.
- Permits should only be issued by a competent person who understands the risks and the necessary control measures to put in place (Authorising Person).
- A permit should be task specific and the necessary risk assessments and method statements still need to be done. A permit is not a replacement.

- Permits should only be in place for a limited duration and be clearly dated and with specific conditions attached.
- Permits should not be transferred to other people or companies.
- Any safety precautions required should be done prior to work commencing. The permit should state these requirements, for example, electrical isolation or discharge of pressuring systems.
- The authorising person should only sign and date the permit when they are satisfied that all precautionary measures have been taken.
- If risks are too high, for example because of bad weather conditions or dangerous structure, then a permit should not be issued.
- When operating several permits at once, a Permit Register should be used to prevent conflicts in work activities. Each permit should have a unique reference number.
- All permits should be retained by the authorising person. An example of a General Application permit is provided at the end of this guidance note. You can find examples of specific permits Guidance Notes 5 & 19 – Confined Spaces and Hot Works.

Permitted conditions

Listed below are some examples of control measures that should be considered when issuing a permit (not exhaustive):

Roof works

- Testing roof fragility
- Edge protection
- Prevention of falls of materials or objects
- Personal Protective Equipment.
- Atmospheric monitoring
- Isolation
- Emergency procedures
- Adequate means of access.

Hot works

- Good housekeeping
- Use of protective curtains
- All 'hot works' equipment should be regularly maintained and inspected
- Ensure a competent person visits the area after the hot works has finished to ensure that no smouldering embers or hot surfaces remain
- Provision of suitable fire extinguishers
- Ensure that sprinklers (if installed) are isolated and reactivated after the works.

Isolation

Once the permit comes into operation, where necessary, warning signs and often a lookout need to be posted around the area where work is being undertaken. When working on machinery and / or electrical systems, they should be physically isolated i.e. locked off (possibly with the contractor's own padlock) etc. When plant is isolated, it should be stated as being such on the permit.

Cancellation of a permit

When the operations laid out in the permit have been completed, it should be cancelled immediately and returned to the originator. They should ensure that the work detailed on the permit has been done satisfactorily. They should then sign off the permit to ensure that it is fully cancelled.

NOTE: This may only be done when all personnel and equipment involved in the work detailed on the permit has been removed from the permit working area.

Returning to service

The plant or work area etc. may now be returned to service. The person responsible for the plant or work area must be satisfied that it is safe to do this - this person might require a final inspection before countersigning the final close of the permit.

Training

All staff should be made aware of the importance of the use and procedure of permit to work systems when they are in place or introduced into the workplace.

Overview

Permit to work forms should incorporate the following features:

- The permit must specify who is to do the work, the time for which it is valid, the work to be done and the necessary precautions
- During the permit, no person shall work on any plant not covered by the permit
- No person shall carry out work which is not authorised by the permit. If there is to be a change in the work, the permit must be amended / cancelled. This can only be done by the authorised originator of the permit
- There must be liaison with other work areas whose activities could be affected by the permit system

- Where the permit to work is to be carried out on part of a site or on specific plant, the limits of the work must be clearly marked
- Permits must take into account all contractors on site, who should be briefed prior to the commencement of work.

Further Guidance

- Guidance on permit-to-work systems: A guide for the petroleum, chemical and allied industries
HSG250
ISBN: 9780717629435
Available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg250.htm>
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/safemaintenance/permits.htm>
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/humanfactors/topics/ptw.htm>

Appendix 1

Permit to work

Permit Number:					
Contracting Company:					
Location of work:					
Scope of works:					
Permit valid from:	Time:	Date:			
Permit valid to:	Time:	Date:			
The following services have been isolated / locked off					
	Yes / No	Point of Isolation	Name (print)	Name (signature)	Date
Electricity					
Gas					
Water					
Air					
Fire Alarm System					
Fire Sprinkler System					
Other:					
Other Precautions (e.g. public safety, traffic movement, lone working etc.)					
Tools & Equipment to be used (e.g. Scaffold, PPE, Welding sets, 110V Tools etc.)					
Before work starts					
All the above boxes must be completed and permit signed by both Client Authorising Person and Contractor Site Supervisor before work commences.					
Time:					
Contractor Site Supervisor	Name:	Signature:	Date:		
Client Authorising Person	Name:	Signature:	Date:		
On Completion of work					
Work has been completed, all isolations reinstated, and all persons under my control have been withdrawn.					
Time:					
Contractor Site Supervisor	Name:	Signature:	Date:		
Client Authorising Person	Name:	Signature:	Date:		

© Copyright Alcumus SafeContractor 2016

This publication may be freely reproduced, except for advertising, endorsement or commercial purposes.