



Permits to Work

What is a Permit to Work?

- A permit to work system is a formal written system used to control certain types of work that are potentially hazardous situations.
- It is a document which specifies the work to be done and precautions to be taken
- They form an essential part of safe systems of work for many maintenance activities
- They only allow work to start after safe procedures have been defined and they provide a clear record that all foreseeable hazards have been considered
- A hot-work permit is required for any operation involving open flames or producing heat and/or sparks and must be prepared by a competent person. Hot works include brazing, torch cutting, grinding, soldering and welding. A hot-work permit is used to prevent fire or explosion and will specifically detail the work to be carried out, how and when it is to be done and the precautions to be taken.

Why is a Permit to Work Used?

- A permit to work is needed when maintenance work can only be carried out if normal safeguards are dropped or when new hazards are introduced by the work.
- This could include situations such as:
 - Entry into vessels containing toxic substances
 - Hot work in hazardous areas
 - Working on high voltage equipment
 - Working on live pipelines
- Hazardous situations on a construction site could include:
 - Trench work, tunnels and shafts
 - Confined spaces (vessels etc.)
 - Any hazardous areas
 - Clearance certificates
 - Electrical isolation
 - Work involving heat
 - Work involving cold

Information on a Work Permit

- A permit to work form must help communications between everyone involved. It should be designed by the company issuing the permit, taking into account individual site conditions and requirements.
 - Separate permit forms may be required for different tasks.
 - Basic information may include:
 - Permit title
 - Permit number - reference to other relevant permits or isolation certificates
 - Job location
 - Plant identification - what is to be worked on
 - Description of work to be done and its limitations - what can and can't be done
 - Hazard identification - this should include residual hazards and hazards introduced by the work
 - Precautions necessary has all equipment / plant been isolated and have signs been posted?
 - Protective equipment
 - Authorisation-signature confirming that isolations have been made and precautions taken
 - Acceptance-signature confirming understanding of work to be done, hazards involved and precautions required and info has been explained to workers
 - Extensions and shift handover procedures-signatures confirming plant is safe to work on for new workers
 - Hand back procedures-signed by acceptor certifying work is completed
 - Cancellation-certifying work is tested and the plant is recommissioned
- One of the main requirements with regards to signatures on permits to work is that all signatures/names must be legible