

# Permit-to-work system

**Permit-to-work system is the control system used for certain types of works that are potentially hazardous. It is a formal management system used to control high-risk activities.**

Permit-to-work system is not a permission to carry out the dangerous job, but it is a form of the risk assessment process. Permit-to-work enables the early determination of hazards and the placement of measures to minimise the risk. It is often required for maintenance or construction work by external contractors unless other precautions can be used.

For instance, the permit-to-work will be required during:

- Working at height, including on roofs
- Working in confined spaces, for example, ducts
- Working with heat, for instance, welding, soldering or cutting using hot flame techniques
- Installation of fire safety systems, alarms, etc
- Working on electricity supply systems
- Work with asbestos
- Exposure to hazardous chemicals or microorganisms.
- Excavation and the digging of trenches

The permit-to-work allows to:

- Get the official approval to start works with precise identification of who is responsible
- Assess the nature and the extent of the work
- Specify precautions and measures that must be in place
- Specify the date and address of the workplace

- Ensure everyone involved in the project is informed
- Keep records of all the work

A permit-to-work system should be coordinated and controlled by an issuing authority. The employer, site occupier, principal contractor or installation duty holder all have the responsibility for ensuring that the proper permit-to-work systems are in place. Moreover, everyone who is involved in work on site (contractor, subcontractor, workers) has responsibilities and duties under a permit-to-work system.

Before an application for the permit-to-work, determine if the work to be carried out requires such a measure. This can be done with an early risk assessment. In the next step decide which type of the permit is needed. Blank licenses exist for the following types of work, work at height, hot work, confined spaces, digging of trenches and for unspecified activities. Include the relevant details as per HSE example.

(Table Source: HSE, HSG250)

## Health and Safety Executive

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Permit title  | 2 Permit reference number<br>Reference to other relevant permits or isolation certificates |
| 3 Job location  |  |
| 4 Plant identification  |  |
| 5 Description of work to be done and its limitations  |  |
| 6 Hazard identification – including residual hazards and hazards associated with the work   |  |
| 7 Precautions necessary and actions in the event of an emergency – people who carried out precautions, eg isolating authority, should sign that precautions have been taken   |  |
| 8 Protective equipment (including PPE)  |  |
| 9 Issue – signature (issuing authority) confirming that isolations have been made and precautions taken, except where these can only be taken during the work. Date and time duration of permit. In the case of high hazard work (paragraph 26) a further signature from the permit authoriser will be needed |  |
| 10 Acceptance – signature confirming understanding of work to be done, hazards involved and precautions required. Also confirming permit information has been explained to all permit users   |  |
| 11 Extension/shift handover procedures – signatures confirming checks made that plant remains safe to be worked upon, and new performing authorities and permit users made fully aware of hazards/precautions. New expiry time given  |  |
| 12 Hand-back – signed by performing authority certifying work completed. Signed by issuing authority certifying work completed and plant ready for testing and recommissioning  |  |
| 13 Cancellation – certifying work tested and plant satisfactorily recommissioned  |  |

Figure 1 Essential elements of a permit-to-work form