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Permit to Work Guidance



Coventry City Council

www.coventry.gov.uk

Introduction

The aim of this Guidance is to introduce a safe working procedure to control significant risks by the implementation of a permit to work system.

Coventry City Council operates a permit to work¹ and/or access² system for work which is undertaken under the following categories:

- Excavations or ground penetration in excess of 100mm (0mm in footways)
- Confined Space Entry (Access into and work within confined spaces)
- Access onto and work on roofs)
- Hot works (use of naked flames, abrasive cutting, electric arc welding, hot soldering).
- Working on high voltage or complex electrical equipment / systems
- Access into and work within plant rooms, switch rooms, boiler rooms, lift motor rooms

This guidance is intended to ensure the Council complies with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and any associated subordinate legislation.

Permit to Work

A permit to work is a formal documented procedure that authorises certain people to carry out specific activities that pose a significant risk within a specified time frame. It outlines precautions required to complete the work safely, based on a risk assessment. It describes what work will be done and how it will be done; the latter can be detailed in a 'method statement'.

The permit to work requires declarations from the people authorising the work and carrying out the work. Where necessary it also requires a declaration from those involved in shift / team handover procedures or extensions to the work.

The issue of a permit does not, by itself, make a job safe

A permit to work should ensure that:

- Everyone involved is fully aware of the hazards involved with the work activity. It is essential that the Permit Authoriser has sufficient technical knowledge of all the processes to be used, and is competent to make judgements about the safety of proceeding with the work
- The location and boundaries of work are identified, where necessary, services are isolated or made physically safe and any other specific hazards are identified and made safe where possible or suitable controls put in place
- The person(s) in charge both of the area and the operation are identified, and that all the necessary signage is displayed in and around the area
- Any monitoring or sampling required before, during and after the operation is identified

After the work is completed, the workplace or plant is left in a safe state to return to operations.

This guidance applies to all work in such spaces as described above by Council employees, contractors, sub-contractors and all other persons who are required to access such areas or undertake work in these spaces.

Failure to observe any part of the permit to work procedure will be treated as misconduct which could, depending on the circumstances, be considered as gross misconduct leading to dismissal.

The permit process should also be subject to suitable supervision, monitoring and review to ensure that the conditions of the permit are complied with.

Appendix

PROCEDURE

Authorising a Permit to Work

Managers must retain an up-to-date list of all persons who are authorised to sign and issue a permit to work document. It is compulsory that those nominated to issue permit to work documents are trained to do so and are deemed competent. (refer to Appendix 2 – Permit to Work Flowchart)

Permit Requestor

Permit Requestors are required to liaise with employees and contractors, and any other personnel accessing or working in controlled areas to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the requirements of any permit before requesting its issue. Permit Requestors should seek advice on the requirements of permits if there is any uncertainty regarding the standards expected.

Permit Requestors have the responsibility to ensure that once the method statement and risk assessment are approved by the Permit Authoriser that personnel undertaking the work comply with the agreed safe working arrangements. They must ensure that a copy of the permit is available on site at all times.

Risk assessments must be site specific and not generic and signed by a competent person³. A method statement must accompany the risk assessment and clearly outline the safe system of work to be adhered to.

Permit Requestors must also ensure that any additional information is supplied to the Permit Operator prior to work commencing. For example, utility drawings or building plans.

Permit Authoriser

The Permit Authoriser will either issue or decline a permit to work. Permit Authorisers must be independent of the Permit Requestor. Anyone who is a Permit Authoriser must have sufficient technical knowledge of all processes to be used and where necessary hold the necessary qualifications to demonstrate competency. They must also confirm the competencies of the Permit Operator. Permit Authoriser's must be competent to make judgements about the safety of proceeding with the work. In addition, they must also maintain independence of the work being undertaken to ensure correct procedures are being followed.

Permit Authorisers have the responsibility to ensure that Permit Requestors and Permit Operators monitor

the administration of the permit during the course of the work being undertaken. They will also keep a copy of the permit on file.

Operational buildings using external contractors must ensure that permits are issued in accordance with this guidance and that a copy of the permit is kept in the site manual for future reference. Where required, the services of the Council's 'Permit Authoriser' are available on a Service Level Agreement, fee basis. If an external contractor is to be appointed, advice and guidance should be sought from Coventry City Council's Repairs and Maintenance Manager.

Once the work has been completed, the Permit Requestor will notify the Permit Authoriser who will cancel the permit. No further work can be undertaken until a new permit has been issued.

Employees who are appointed as Permit Authorisers must ensure that the requirements of this guidance are adhered to at all times and that permits are only issued when all the requirements appropriate to the specific permit have been met.

Permit Operator

Permit Operators are responsible for carrying out the work on site. The Permit Requestor must confirm that the Permit Operator is suitably trained in the area of work being undertaken and demonstrate that they have received suitable and sufficient training in the use of and limitations of any work equipment necessary to be used on site. They must also be given copies of risk assessments, method statements and any utility drawings in advance of works commencing.

Permit Extensions

The permit to work must specify the time limitation of the task. If the task is not completed within the time frame, the Permit Requestor must stop the task. The Permit Requestor will need to liaise with the Permit Authoriser, who can either:

- Endorse the permit with a revised task duration, or
- Cancel the permit and issue a new one if appropriate

Closing the Permit

Permit requestors must ensure that the work has been undertaken to an acceptable standard and the work area has been left in a suitable condition before notifying the Permit Authoriser to cancel the permit to work.

If the work has not been completed (even after an extension of time endorsement), then the Permit Requestor must suspend the work, and ensure that the workforce are withdrawn from the area prior to contacting the responsible manager.

Change of Permit Requestor

If the Permit Requestor needs to hand over his/her responsibilities to another person, the work must be suspended immediately. The workforce must be withdrawn and the site left in a safe condition. The Permit Authoriser must be contacted to cancel the permit and decide on further action.

Emergency Procedures

Due to the increased risks involved in activities requiring a permit to work, it is essential that site specific emergency procedures are in place that can adequately deal with the potential consequences if things go wrong. All involved in the activity must fully understand the emergency procedure and their responsibilities for implementing them. For emergency purposes, contact telephone numbers must be listed on the permit to work document.

Legislation

The following list is not exhaustive and you should refer to the activity specific guidance note for additional information, however the key legislative requirements relate to the following:

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations
Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations
Construction Design and Management Regulations 2007

Council Guidance

Quantitative risk assessment [Click here](#)

Permit to Dig
Permit to undertake Hot Work
Permit to Access Confined Spaces
Permit to Access or Work on Roofs
Permit to work on Complex Electrical Systems
Permit to work on Fire Alarm Systems
Permit to Access or Work within Plant Rooms
Permit to Hot Work

Contacts

For further information contact:

Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service on 024 7683 3172
or e-mail healthandsafetyservicesadmin@coventry.gov.uk

Statutory Compliance Team on 024 7683 2897 or e-mail phillip.mcgarra@coventry.gov.uk

Permit requests/Repairs and Maintenance Team on 024 7683 2960
or e-mail simon.amos@coventry.gov.uk or paul.aitken@coventry.gov.uk

If you need this information in another language or format
please contact Health and Safety on 024 7683 3172

Appendix 2 Permit to Work Flowchart

Through a Risk Assessment identify which activities require a permit to work

Nominate and train 'authorised staff' to issue permits to work (Permit Authorisation)

Request and issue Permit to Work

Ensure the requestor is fully aware of his/her responsibilities

Ensure the correct equipment is available for the activity

Ensure that the Permit Operator understands the safe system of work

Ensure there are good controls in place for the hazards within the environment

Ensure monitoring of the activity takes place to confirm the conditions of the permit remain valid

Conditions have changed. Stop the activity immediately and notify the Permit Authoriser

Conditions have not changed. Monitor progress and Permit Requestor to request time extension if required

Prior to closure of the permit ensure the work area has been left in a safe condition

Return Pink and white Copy of Permit to the Permit Authoriser to Cancel the Permit

Review the overall effectiveness of the permit to work arrangements