



Permits-to-work

Guidance for Heads of School/Service

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1. Introduction – Permit-to-work

This guidance is for Heads of School/ Service within whose remit the small number of work activities identified below will occur. **Most of these activities are carried out by Facilities Directorate (FD) Estates who are therefore best suited to managing the procedure.**

For some of these work activities the permit-to-work is a legal requirement and for others, is the best way to ensure that safety-critical controls are in place. Speak to FD Estates Helpdesk (ext. 35555) or your Health and Safety Manager if you have any questions.

2. Definitions for permits-to-work

A Permit-to-work is a written record that authorises specific work, at a specific location on property managed by the University, for a specific period of time; it is an agreement between the Permit Issuer and the Permit Acceptor, which documents the conditions, preparations, precautions and limitations before work can start.

This protocol does NOT include:

- **Asbestos** (as this is covered in a particularly rigid and specific Standard – this is currently being written so please speak to your Health and Safety Manager for advice in the meantime).
- Work on **medical gas pipeline systems** – this requires a permit-to-work but is covered by Department of Health Guidance (*Health Technical Memorandum 02-01: Medical gas pipeline systems*). Contact Leeds NHS trust Estates Department via 0113 243 3144 for details of their system.
- Certain types of work in a **confined space** (see the Standard for a definition); if you are doing this type of work then speak to your Health and Safety Manager.

This protocol DOES cover:

- **Work on industrial gas systems** – ‘Industrial gas system’ describes the provision of gas (e.g. North Sea gas to heat buildings/ water or ovens for cooking).
 - This **does not** include emergency works undertaken by an approved contractor in order to avert, or remedy, a major incident, emergency works is covered by the critical incident plan/ emergency plan.
- **Excavations (digging a hole on property managed by the University)** – digging into the ground at a depth greater than 50mm (2") below surfaces where underground services may be found.
 - This includes: trenching, excavation as part of construction work, digging, preparation of new shrub beds, and installation of fence posts.
 - This **does not include**: routine maintenance of existing shrub beds where digging is less than spade depth (300mm or 12"), or regular maintenance in a space where up-to-date utility drawings are available (e.g. the grassed area outside LUU where service utilities are clearly marked). Contact FD Estates Helpdesk for more information (ext 35555). It also **does not** include faculty-managed teaching or research (as these will be covered by the usual activity risk assessment).
- **Hot works** – work involving temperatures that could give rise to fire or ignition of flammable substances and combustible materials.
 - This includes work that uses or creates naked flames, sparks, smoke or fumes, e.g. brazing and soldering; bitumen boilers; electric arc welding; gas welding or cutting; hot air welding; disk cutting in confined spaces and areas where there is a high risk of fire or explosion.
 - This **does not include**: faculty-managed teaching or research experiments or faculty/service-managed routine work in a workshop (as these will be covered by the usual activity risk assessment), or work which is carried out outside and located away from buildings and combustible/flammable materials so that there is no longer a fire risk.
- **Work on pressurised/steam systems (including steam distribution and compressed air systems)** ‘pressurised/ steam system’ means any system comprising one or more pressure vessels of rigid construction, any associated pipe work and protective devices (e.g. pressure relief valve) which may (or

already does) contain steam or any fluid that would have a vapour pressure greater than 0.5 bar above atmospheric pressure when in equilibrium with its vapour at either the actual temperature of the liquid or 17.5 degrees Celsius.

- This **does not include**: transportable pressure containers (e.g. compressed gas cylinder) or faculty-managed teaching or research experiments or faculty/service-managed routine work in a workshop which would be covered by the usual activity risk assessment (e.g. autoclaves would not be included unless they were operated directly from an in-house steam system). It also **does not** include emergency works undertaken by an approved contractor in order to avert, or remedy, a major incident, emergency works is covered by the critical incident plan/ emergency plan.
- **Work on high (anything above 240V) and low (230/240V – normal mains) voltage systems**
 - This includes: Switching off any isolator, switch fuse, distribution board, or mains circuit board that may affect people's safety (e.g. by switching off a fume cupboard system without telling the users); Switching off any isolator, switch fuse, distribution board, or mains circuit board that may affect the University's information technology systems; test on live electrical apparatus; test on electrical distribution systems that need the installed safety systems/barriers defeated or removed; work on electrical distribution systems that expose personnel to shock hazards; work on remote and automatically controlled low voltage switch-gear; isolation of electrical equipment to make it safe unless carried out by a competent person holding a valid Authorisation Certificate; test on any earthing system whilst the supply is still live.
 - This **does not include**: emergency works undertaken by an approved contractor in order to avert, or remedy, a major incident, emergency works is covered by the critical incident plan/ emergency plan. Or faculty-managed teaching or research experiments or faculty/service managed routine work in a workshop (as this is covered by the usual activity risk assessment).

Permits-to-work cannot be issued for any other work activity, unless FD Estates give their express approval.

3. Roles and actions

The health and safety responsibilities of staff, students or visiting personnel are set out in the University Health and Safety Policy as well as the responsibilities of contractors as set out in FD 'Creating and maintaining a safe environment' document. For the management of permits-to-work the role-holders listed below are proposed to carry out additional specific actions.

FD Estates

- Manage the permit-to-work system including the identification of live permits.
- Identify, train, formally authorise and monitor Permit Issuers.
- Monitor that the permit-to-work Procedure is followed.

Head of School / Service

- Check if any of the work activities in the list above are being carried out under your remit and if so speak to your Health and Safety Manager.
- Check that only people authorised by FD Estates issue permits-to-work in your school/ service.

Authorising Engineers

- Attend training to know what the responsibilities and consequences of compliance are.
- Check that Permit Issuers understand the responsibilities and consequences of non-compliance when a permit-to-work's is used.
- Formally authorise the Permit Issuers (also known as an Authorising Person in FD Estates)

Permit Issuer (i.e. a member of staff or contractor, who has been formally authorised by FD Estates to issue permits)

- Undertake the training that has been identified in the training matrix.
- Follow the Procedure for the permit-to-work system.

Line Managers

- If your staff are carrying out a work activity that requires a permit-to-work, check that they include its use in an activity risk assessment and follow the Procedure
- Check that any of your staff working under a permit-to-work are competent for that activity.

Permit Receiver (i.e. the person carrying out the work)

- Check that anyone carrying out work activity under the permit-to-work follows the Procedure, and all instructions, precautions and control measures given by the permit-to-work and by the Permit Issuer.

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4. Management of the permit-to-work system itself

- FD Estates manage the permit-to-work system because the vast majority of these activities are carried out by them. In addition, as the work activities are safety-critical they need to be carefully monitored and safe systems of work followed. Please ask any staff involved in these work activities to give as much notice to FD Estates as possible, if a permit-to-work system may be needed, so they can ensure that the correct Permit Issuer is available.
- The need for a permit-to-work can be identified at a number of stages when work activities (often maintenance based) are being planned or carried out. Ideally this would be during the planning stage, but it could be just before the work activity is carried out, or at any point during work (if the planned activities change). The key thing is that the permit-to-work must be in place before the work activity requiring it, happens. The person identifying the need for a permit-to-work can be varied, from a project planning officer, team leader, the person commissioning the work, to the person who has been asked to directly carry out the work.

5. Who can do work requiring a permit-to-work

- The people carrying out work that requires a permit-to-work must be approved University staff or contractors.
 - If contractors are used they must be identified from the Health and Safety Approved Contractor Register (FD or school/ service) – contact FD Estates Helpdesk (ext. 35555) or your Health and Safety Manager.
 - If University staff are used, speak to FD Estates Helpdesk (ext. 35555) or your Health and Safety Manager, and the Permit Issuer will authorise the appropriate staff member, having checked that they are competent to carry out the work.

6. Risk assessment

- If you have staff who are carrying out work activities that require permits-to-work, or are appointing contractors to carry out these work activities, you should be assured that the permit-to-work should be listed as a control measure in the risk assessment.

7. Stand-alone construction site on Property managed by the University

- A standalone construction site is a controlled, defined area where construction activities take place or to which contractors have access, but where access is restricted to our staff and students by fixed barriers. Examples include renovation, decoration, fitting out etc.

8. Permit Issuers and Authorising Engineers

- FD Estates manage the permit-to-work system. This includes authorisation of Permit Issuers to issue permits-to-work, because Permit Issuers have to undergo specific training (see the training matrix) before they are assessed as being competent.

- Only Permit Issuers formally authorised by Authorising Engineers from FD Estates can issue permits-to-work for the work activities listed above. If you believe that a permit-to-work is needed for any other type of work outside this, you should speak to your Health and Safety Manager to explore alternatives.
- Authorising Engineers are senior people identified in FD Estates as being competent to train, monitor and authorise the Permit Issuers.
- Usually the authorised Permit Issuers will be FD Estates staff, but occasionally staff in other faculties/ services may need to take on this role.
- If you need to have a staff member authorised to issue permits-to-work in your faculty/ service group, this is coordinated by Health and Safety Services. Please contact your Health and Safety Manager or the Health and Safety Manager for Estates for more information. They will need to undergo specialist training and be monitored by FD Estates.

9. Training

- Authorising Engineers, Permit Issuers and Permit Receivers are trained as per FD Estates training requirements before being authorised to issue a permit-to-work. As part of this they learn how to use the systems to check live permits-to-work, issuing and extending permits-to-work, site visits, changes to work or people, shift change and handovers, suspension, hand-back and cancellations.
- See the training matrix for further information.

10. Permit-to-work, the written record

- The Permit-to-work record is produced by FD Estates either on an electronic system (SOTER) or as a paper document (in emergency or as a backup if the SOTER system fails).
- For Permit Issuers outside of FD Estates who do not have access to SOTER, a University-approved paper-based system must be used (as set out in the Procedure). Health and Safety Services hold this and can give more information.
- It includes information on control measures and emergency processes. For more information speak to the Health and Safety Manager for Estates or your Health and Safety Manager.
- If the record is made on SOTER, it will automatically be kept for 3 years.
- If it is paper-based a copy should be given to the FD Health and Safety Manager or kept locally.

11. Procedure for the permit-to-work system

- There is one Procedure for the permit-to-work system attached to this protocol which sets out the overall steps which must be followed; FD Estates manage this Procedure.
- The details vary between different types of permit-to-work (e.g. for hot works, a one hour fire watch is identified as a standard control but would not usually be required for confined space entry) but the overarching Procedure for the permit-to-work system remains the same.

12. Support and Guidance

- For more help and support on permits-to-work please contact the FD Health and Safety Manager on ext. 35555 or your Health and Safety Manager.