

POLICY FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

PART C ARRANGEMENTS

Section 33

PERMITS TO WORK

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1. INTRODUCTION - WHAT IS A PERMIT TO WORK?

A permit to work (PTW) is a management system designed to ensure that when a high risk activity is necessary, the health and safety aspects of the task are properly planned and managed. High risk can mean:

- An activity, such as electrical work on a live system,
- Work with a high risk materials, such as asbestos,
- Work that may create a source of ignition such as welding (Hotworking)
- An activity that presents a potential high risk to others, such as work on an alarm system that means that the system temporarily cannot be used.

The permit to work procedure provides a simple and clear process for managing the highest risk activities. They allow us to ensure that risks and hazards are listed and dealt with properly managed through effective control measures, and provide a record of this process.

General principles - The following aspects should be considered with respect to PTW Systems:

- How the PTW system will be managed within the service;
- What the PTW is needed for, and the information it must contain.
- Human factors, for example, stress, fatigue, bad habits and poor attitudes to safety;
- The skills and competence of the workforce;

Contributory factors for an assessor to consider concerning the Work Permit System – Managers involved in the issue of PTWs and management of the work must consider the following points:

- Whether staff have been sufficiently informed, instructed, trained and supervised to minimise a potential human failing during operation of the PTW system;
- Whether the work permit system includes sufficient safety information, maintenance instructions, correct PPE and equipment for use;
- Whether the permit contains sufficient information about the type of work required (Equipment removal, excavation, hot/cold work, repairing seals, vessel entry, waste disposal, isolation of electrical systems);
- Whether there is sufficient provision available to fulfil the requirements of the PTW system;
- Whether the employees responsible for control of the maintenance work are identified within the work permit system and that the work is properly authorised by a responsible person;
- Whether the work permit system is managed, regularly inspected and reviewed;
- Whether all work permits are kept on file;
- Whether sufficient precautions are taken prior to the work (isolation, draining, flushing, environmental monitoring, risk assessments, communication, time allotted for the work);

- Whether staff are aware of the type of environment they are working in during the operation of a work permit;
- Whether the person responsible for operating the plant is aware of the type of maintenance involved and how long it is likely to take;
- Whether the work permit system involves a formal procedure whereby the maintained plant or equipment is handed back to operation.

Major hazards - Major hazards could arise from the following:

- Wrong type of work permit used;
- Wrong information about work required on the work permit;
- Failure to recognise the hazards where work is carried out (e.g. flammable substances);
- Introduction of ignition source in controlled flameproof area (e.g. welding, non spark-proof tools, non-intrinsically safe equipment used in intrinsically safe zones);
- Terms of work permit not adhered to (e.g. failure to isolate plant and/or drain lines of hazardous substances);
- Failure to hand-over plant in safe condition on completion of work/cancelling of work permit;
- Unauthorised staff performing work permit functions;
- Poor management of the work permit system; and
- Insufficient monitoring of the work permit system.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

Directors must ensure that there are local systems within their service to control any activities that present a high level of risk that warrants the use of a PTW.

Managers responsible for projects that involve high risk activities must ensure that the PTW system is used, and that once a PTW is issued, the measures outlined in the PTW are properly implemented and monitored, so that the risks are controlled appropriately.

The approval of PTWs is the responsibility of the Premises Manager for the location where the work is planned. If a Premises Manager has any doubt as to their competence to judge whether precautions are sufficient, they should contact the Safety, Health and Wellbeing (SHaW) team for help.

If there is a disagreement on the suitability of the control measures planned in a PTW, the issue must be referred to the SHaW team for consideration by a qualified and competent safety professional

3. WHEN A PERMIT TO WORK IS REQUIRED

Permits are required for the following activities:

- Work on live electrical equipment or systems

- Work on asbestos that could release fibres to the air (unless the work is carried out by a licensed contractor, in which case a method statement will be provided by the contractor for approval),
- Hot work (see below)
- Work in confined spaces (see below)
- Work with any other process, substance or equipment, where the risk of injury cannot be adequately controlled by the normal risk assessment procedure.

Hot work is any work that involves a source of heat that could cause injury or fire. It includes welding, brazing and cutting with oxy-acetylene equipment. The hazards are wide ranging and can include actual damage from the work, such as burns and fire, and indirect problems with waste products in the air and the risk of heat stroke.

Confined spaces can be any space of an enclosed nature where there is a risk of death or serious injury from hazardous substances or dangerous conditions (such as lack of oxygen). Some confined spaces can be easy to identify, for example:

- Enclosures with limited openings;
- Storage tanks;
- Silos;
- Reaction vessels;
- Enclosed drains;
- Sewers.

Others may be less obvious, but can be equally dangerous, for example:

- Open-topped chambers;
- Vats;
- Ductwork;
- Unventilated or poorly ventilated rooms.

It is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of confined spaces. Some sites may become confined spaces when work is carried out, or during their construction or modification. For this reason, if you are in doubt about whether an area might be a confined space, consult the SHaW team.

Permits to work may also be required for any task on request from the SHaW team, if they consider that the existing control measures are not appropriate for the level of risk involved. In these circumstances, the SHaW team will also need to approve and sign the PTW before the work can begin.

For any advice on work activities that require a PTW, contact the SHaW team.

4. THE PERMIT TO WORK PROCEDURE

The procedure for application, approval and management of PTWs is described in **Appendix 1** – the PTW flowchart.

5. RECORDS

Once a PTW has been issued, a copy must be kept with the team or individuals carrying out the work. After the work is complete, the PTW and all supporting documents must be placed on the premises file or the project health and safety file, if the task is part of a larger project.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about any aspect of this arrangement, contact the SHaW team on 020 8359 7955.

For information about risk assessment and general health and safety management, and high risk processes and equipment, follow the links to the council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy, in particular, the following sections:

[Management of Health and Safety](#)

[COSHH \(Control of Substances Hazardous to Health\)](#)

[Electricity at Work](#)

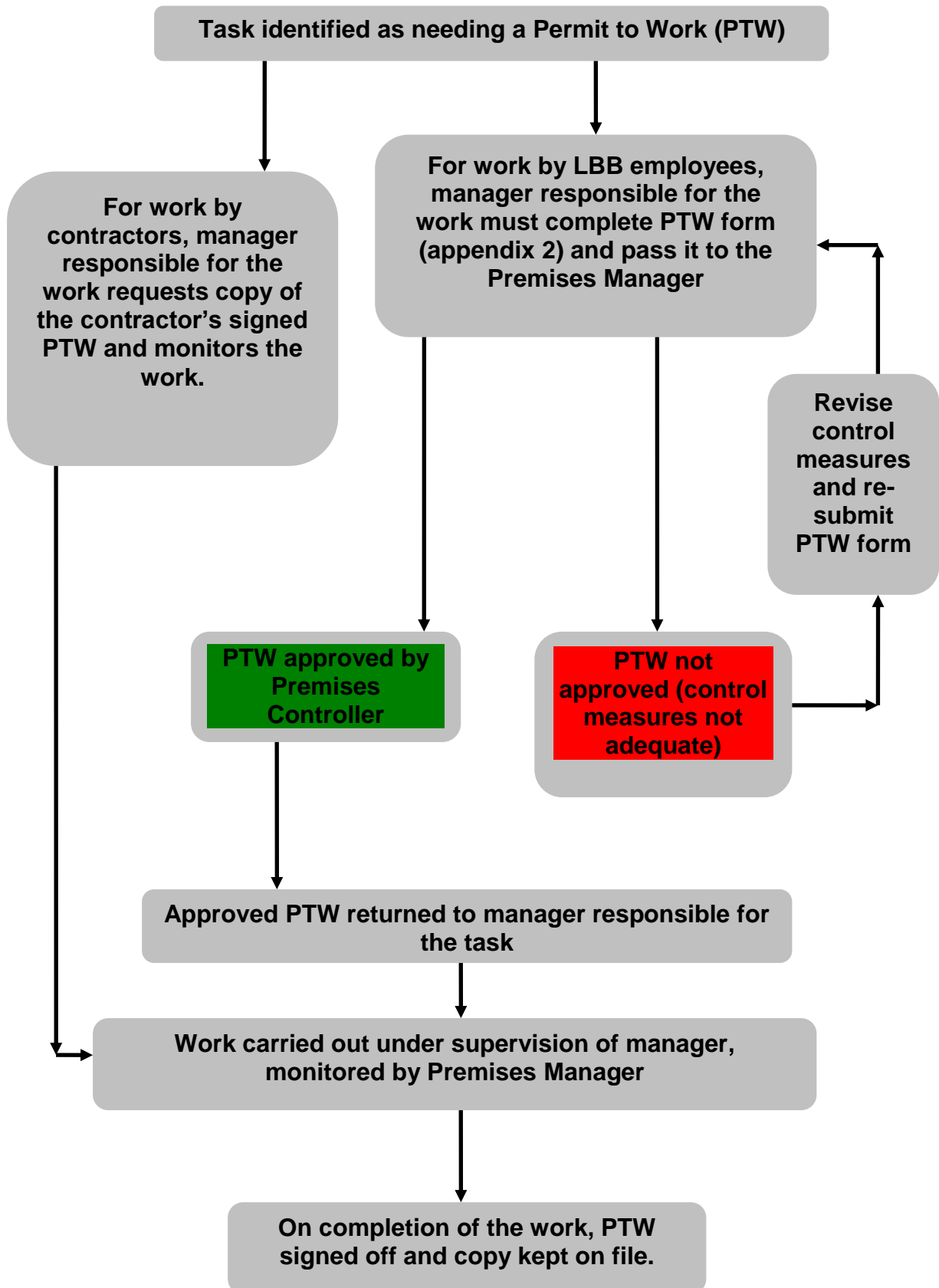
[Gas Safety](#)

[Asbestos](#)

[Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres](#)

Working at Heights

APPENDIX 1 – PTW FLOWCHART



APPENDIX 2 – PERMIT TO WORK FORM

Location:	Description of Task
Premises Manager:	
Manager responsible for work	Planned date for work
Hazardous activity	
Description of control measures (please attach full risk assessment and other relevant documents)	
Attached documents (please list)	
PTW approved:	
Signature of Premises Manager	
Date	
Additional comments:	