

Health and Safety Guidance Note Permit to Work (Laboratories and Workshops)

(Ref: QM_OHSD_SE002)

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1.0 Introduction

A permit-to-work system is a **formal recorded process** used to **control work** which is identified as **hazardous and involves a number of different persons / departments* / organisations**. It is also a **means of communication** between the laboratory managers / supervisors of the area, contractors / operators and their management and those who carry out the hazardous work.

**a department indicates any College Department, Institute or School*

Permit-to-work systems are **not applied to every day work related hazardous activities**. Every day hazardous work activities will be controlled by the appropriate risk assessment for the work (see 2 below).

2.0 Permit to Work System for Laboratories and Workshops

The Laboratories and Workshop permit (**ref QM/H&S/107**) is intended for use by those in charge of laboratories and workshops to (i) **control access** and to (ii) **identify hazards and risks generated by their own work / area, to those** (normally from a different organisation / dept) **that are to conduct hazardous work**.

Examples where this permit **would** be applicable:

- i. Testing and servicing of a College laboratory fume cupboard or microbiological safety cabinet by a service engineer.
- ii. Repair of a centrifuge used with infectious material by a service engineer.
- iii. Replacement or maintenance of light bulbs within a Containment Level 3 laboratory (by Estates operative or external maintenance operative).
- iv. Repair of a sink / drain pipe within a radiation laboratory (by Estates operative or external maintenance operative).
- v. Repair of ceiling within a laboratory containing Class 3 / 4 lasers (by Estates operative or external maintenance operative).
- vi. Repair of racking and lights within a chemical store (by Estates operative or external maintenance operative).

Permits-to-work are **not** required for work normally conducted in laboratories and workshops (staff research, teaching, demonstrations to students, work conducted visiting researchers etc), for controlling visitors onto site / area or routine maintenance tasks in non-hazardous areas (e.g. in offices or other low risk areas).

Other risks which may be associated with the work, (e.g. electrical / gas isolations, arc welding, roof access and entry into confined spaces) are **not** controlled by this permit. Such work is managed by



Estates and will be controlled using **separate Permits** (e.g. a gas / electrical isolation permit, a 'hot work' permit, a working at height permit). It is essential however, that Estates (via helpdesk, ext 2580) are made aware of any works under the Laboratories and Workshop permit that may affect, or involve, the fabric or any services in the area / building and/or require access into Estates controlled areas (e.g. roof access, risers, tunnels, electrical cupboards).

3.0 Permit to Work Form Content

The laboratories and workshops Permit-to-Work form:

- i. Identifies the nature of the work, the location, the date and timescale and the personnel involved.
- ii. Has a unique reference number which assists tracking and record keeping.
- iii. Identifies all of the existing hazards and risks **and** new hazards and risks introduced **and** states the required precautions for each.
- iv. Ensures a controlled and documented hand-over and hand-back of area / equipment.

4.0 Permit to Work Procedure

- i. A Permit to Work must be issued by the Lab Manager or responsible person who has the necessary knowledge and experience to recognise the risks and the required control measures.
- ii. A unique number must be assigned (permit number)
- iii. The form must be accepted by the operative or contractor – this person must acknowledge that all requirements are understood.
- iv. The form must be signed in Sections B or C by both parties **prior** to the work commencing.
- v. The form must be displayed in a prominent position (e.g. laboratory door) for the duration of the works.
- vi. Once the work is **complete** the form must be signed off (Section D) by the person conducting the work to ensure the area has been made safe.
- vii. If the work is **incomplete**, the operative or contractor must indicate that in Section D and ensure the area is made safe for normal operations.
- viii. The Lab Manager (or responsible person) must sign Section E of the form to accept the laboratory / workshop area back to indicate that it can now revert to normal use by staff / students.
- ix. If the work is cancelled, the form must be withdrawn by writing 'CANCELLED' over the page.



5.0 For other types of Control Permits used by College laboratory and workshop staff, see the College H&S website:

Prior to Inspection, Servicing, Repair, Condemning or Return of Items, Devices and Equipment:

Declaration of Decontamination Status
(ref QM_HS_0106_March 2011_Declaration of Decontamination)

When vacating a laboratory permanently or before major refurbishment or demolishing:


Procedure for Laboratory Clearance
(ref QM_HS_0019_Jan 2005_labclearance)

This guidance note has been produced following accepted best practice and the latest guidance from the Health and Safety Executive.



Document Control

Initial Data

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