



44. Fire - Training, Permits & Miscellaneous - Hot Work Permit System Audit & Review

Category:	Fire
Subcategory:	Training, Permits & Miscellaneous
Frequency:	Yearly
Status:	Best Practice
Type:	Competent Person
Priority:	Recommended
Commonality:	Occasional

Note: This document provides guidance to support compliance but is not a substitute for professional advice.

Why This Task Matters

Your annual audit of the hot work permit system ensures that controls for ignition risks from maintenance and construction activities are effective and followed. By maintaining robust procedures for welding, cutting, and other fire hazards in educational settings, you protect pupils, staff, and buildings from preventable fire incidents. Your systematic approach to this essential safety control demonstrates your comprehensive commitment to fire prevention.

Task Summary

Best Practice: An annual audit of the hot work permit system confirms that controls for welding, cutting, or other ignition risks are in place and followed. This comprehensive review involves examining permit procedures, checking permit records, verifying staff training, and assessing system effectiveness. Schools and colleges undertaking maintenance or contractor projects must be particularly vigilant, as sparks and heat can ignite surrounding materials. Regular audits reduce the risk of fire incidents arising from planned works. The audit includes reviewing permit documentation, checking compliance with procedures, and identifying improvement opportunities. Evidence produced includes audit report documenting findings and recommendations, copies of permit records showing compliance with procedures, and any corrective actions identified.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** Requires adequate controls for ignition risks
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses):** Provides guidance on hot work controls
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice:** Includes guidance on hot work procedures
- **Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015:** Require fire safety in construction activities
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974:** Requires control of ignition risks

Typical Frequency

The hot work permit system should be audited annually, or sooner if there are significant changes to procedures or if incidents occur. In educational settings with maintenance activities, annual audits are recommended for maintaining system effectiveness. However, more frequent audits may be needed following hot work incidents or changes to permit procedures.

Applicability

This task is recommended for educational establishments that undertake maintenance or construction activities involving hot work, which is occasional as not all schools have extensive maintenance programs. It is a best practice task essential for controlling ignition risks. The task applies to schools and colleges with facilities maintenance or construction projects.

Responsible Persons

- **Task Type:** Competent Person
- **In-House Requirements:** This task can be completed by trained facilities managers or fire safety officers who have received appropriate training in permit system auditing. Staff should be familiar with hot work procedures and permit requirements.
- **Permit to Work:** No permit to work is typically required for this audit task.
- **Delivery Model:** Normally completed in-house by trained staff, with support from maintenance supervisors.

Key Considerations

- **Timing considerations:** Schedule during school holidays to allow for thorough review without disruption

- **Cost implications:** Minimal cost if completed in-house, though may require occasional external audit support
- **Resource requirements:** Access to permit records and maintenance documentation
- **Potential disruption:** Minimal disruption as this is primarily a documentation review
- **Risk assessment requirements:** Audit findings should inform the fire risk assessment

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Ensure auditor is familiar with hot work permit requirements
- Confirm access to permit records and maintenance documentation
- Gather information about recent hot work activities
- Review current permit procedures and forms

Tools & Materials

- Current hot work permit procedures and forms
- Permit records and maintenance logs
- Audit checklist and documentation templates
- Training records for permit users
- Safety equipment inspection records

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Pre-Audit Preparation

1. Review current hot work permit procedures and requirements
2. Gather permit records from the previous year
3. Identify staff involved in hot work activities
4. Prepare audit checklist and documentation forms

Phase B: Documentation Review

1. Examine permit forms for completeness and accuracy
2. Check that all required information is recorded
3. Verify permit approval procedures are followed
4. Review fire watch arrangements and durations

Phase C: Procedure Evaluation

1. Assess permit system accessibility and usability
2. Check training records for permit users
3. Verify communication procedures for permit issuance
4. Evaluate monitoring and close-out procedures

Phase D: Compliance Assessment

1. Sample review of completed permits for compliance
2. Check incident records related to hot work activities
3. Assess effectiveness of fire prevention measures
4. Identify any procedural gaps or improvement needs

Phase E: Documentation and Reporting

1. Document audit findings and compliance levels
2. Prepare detailed audit report with recommendations
3. Identify corrective actions and improvement opportunities
4. Update procedures if deficiencies are found

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- All permits must contain required information and approvals
- Fire watch procedures must be properly documented
- Training records must be current for all users
- Incident rates should be within acceptable levels

If Results Fail

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. Immediately implement corrective actions for identified deficiencies. Escalate significant issues to facilities management and arrange procedure updates. Schedule additional training for permit users.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

Update permit procedures and distribute to relevant staff. Ensure all documentation is securely filed.

Completion Checks

Verify that the audit report comprehensively evaluates the permit system. Confirm that permit records are properly reviewed. Ensure recommendations are specific and actionable.

Record-Keeping & Evidence

- **Upload Process:** Upload any required statutory or supporting evidence to the corresponding task form in Compliance Pod.
- **Statutory Evidence:** No statutory evidence is required for this task.
- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence:** Audit report and permit records documenting compliance support audit readiness.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

- **Common mistakes to avoid:** Not reviewing all permit types, missing training records, or failing to assess procedural effectiveness
- **Best practices for efficient completion:** Maintain detailed permit records, conduct regular self-assessments, and coordinate with maintenance supervisors
- **Pro tips for educational settings:** Integrate permit procedures with contractor management, use audits to reinforce safety training, and maintain clear records of hot work activities
- **Warning signs that indicate problems:** Incomplete permits, missing fire watch records, or incidents related to hot work

Quick Reference Checklist

- Hot work permit procedures reviewed
- Permit records from previous year gathered
- Documentation completeness verified
- Procedure effectiveness assessed
- Training records checked
- Audit findings documented
- Corrective actions identified
- Evidence uploaded to Compliance Pod

Grouped Tasks

Grouping is feasible; align with related tasks of the same frequency and contractor visit.

Related Tasks

- Fire - Training, Permits & Miscellaneous - Fire Safety Training Records Audit & Review

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Users must ensure that all tasks are carried out in line with current legislation, manufacturer instructions, site-specific risk assessments, and organisational policies. Where necessary, professional advice should be sought from competent and accredited specialists — for example, fire risk assessors, water hygiene consultants, electrical engineers, gas safety contractors, or health and safety advisors.