

PERMIT · UNITED KINGDOM · 2026

Hot Works Permit

UK hot works permit template and structure — fire watch, RC39, atmospheric testing, post-work monitoring.

A hot works permit is the document that authorises a specific person to carry out a specific hot-work task (welding, brazing, grinding, cutting, soldering with naked flame, or paint stripping with hot air) in a specific location for a specific time window. It is not strictly mandated by name in UK statute, but it is the mechanism by which the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 duty to manage fire risk is discharged, and it is required by every UK insurer underwriting commercial property — typically via the FPA's RC39 Hot Work Procedures.

Document structure a reviewer expects

- 1. Permit number and date**
Sequential permit number, date of issue, site and area.
- 2. Description of hot work**
Specific task (e.g. MIG welding 8mm steel plate), exact location, equipment to be used.
- 3. Issuer and permit holder**
Named issuer with role; named permit holder with competence reference (e.g. CCNSG, NVQ).
- 4. Area preparation checklist**
Combustibles within 10m removed / protected, floor voids checked, cavities sealed, sprinklers operational.
- 5. Atmospheric and ignition controls**
LEL test result where flammables may be present; gas isolation references; static control measures.
- 6. Fire-watch arrangements**
Named fire watcher, extinguisher type and position, planned watch duration during and after work.
- 7. Time window**
Permit valid from / to (max 8 hours per RC39), with re-issue required after expiry.
- 8. Sign-off — work complete**
Permit holder signs to confirm work has ended, time recorded.
- 9. Sign-off — fire watch complete**
Fire watcher signs to confirm minimum 60-minute (or insurer-specified) watch period has elapsed with no smouldering.
- 10. Permit cancellation**
Issuer signs to formally cancel the permit and confirm normal site control resumed.

Common reasons reviewers reject this document

- Post-work fire watch under 60 minutes or not separately signed off.
- Operative listed as both permit holder and fire watcher.

- Generic 'area cleared' rather than itemised list of combustibles removed or protected.
- No reference to floor voids, wall cavities or sprinkler isolation status.
- Permit issued for an open-ended time window with no expiry.
- No sequential permit numbering — auditor can't reconcile against the site permit register.
- Issuer competence not recorded — the document doesn't show the issuer has authority to authorise hot works.

UK regulation reference

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 SI 2005/1541

The responsible person's duty to manage fire risk — hot works are a key control under article 9 risk assessment.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents/made>

FPA RC39 — Hot Work Procedures FPA RC39

The insurer-led de-facto standard; compliance is typically a condition of UK commercial fire insurance.

<https://www.thefpa.co.uk/>

JCoP — Joint Code of Practice on Fire Prevention JCoP 9th Ed.

Standard contract condition for construction sites — references RC39 for hot work permits.

<https://www.thefpa.co.uk/products-and-services/publications/joint-code-of-practice-on-the-protection-from-fire-of-construction-sites-and-buildings-undergoing-renovation>

CDM 2015 SI 2015/51

Principal contractor's duty to plan, manage and monitor — including fire prevention controls.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/51/contents/made>

Frequently asked questions

Is a hot works permit a legal requirement?

Not directly named in statute, but it is the standard mechanism for discharging the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 duty to manage fire risk during hot work, and FPA RC39 compliance is typically a condition of commercial property insurance — making it functionally mandatory on any insured site.

How long does the post-work fire watch need to be?

RC39 sets a minimum of 60 minutes for general hot work. Most UK insurers require 120 minutes for higher-risk environments (timber-framed construction, heritage, paper-based industries). The permit must record the actual time the fire watch ended, with a separate signature.

What's the 10-metre rule?

RC39 requires that combustibles within a 10-metre radius of the hot work are removed; where removal isn't possible, they must be covered with a fire-resistant blanket and damped down. Floor voids and wall cavities within the radius must be checked for combustible debris and dust.

Can the same person issue the permit and carry out the work?

No. RC39 separates the roles for a reason: the issuer's job is to verify the area is safe; the permit holder's job is to carry out the work. Self-issued permits void the audit trail and are not accepted by insurers.

How long can a hot works permit be issued for?

RC39 recommends a maximum 8-hour shift duration, after which the permit must be cancelled and re-issued if the work continues. Open-ended permits are routinely rejected by insurers and principal contractors.

Need a finished version of this document?

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