

Permits and Who Signs Them

About 8 minutes to deliver

A permit is not paperwork, it is a person taking responsibility for conditions they checked — and the signature is the whole point.

A permit exists because somebody has to look at the actual conditions, decide the work can be done safely, and put their name to that decision. The form is just the record of it.

The permits you will meet on a job: confined space entry, hot work, energised electrical work, excavation, lifting plans, and roof or line-breaking permits.

WHAT A PERMIT ACTUALLY SAYS

Every one of them says the same four things:

- What the work is, exactly, and where. Not "welding, plant" — this weld, on this pipe, in this room.
- What was checked, and what was found. Gas readings with numbers and times, isolations proved, the fire watch briefed, the area cleared to a distance somebody measured.
- What controls have to stay in place for the whole job, and who is watching them.
- When it expires.

THE RULES PEOPLE BREAK

- It is signed before the work starts, not after. A permit filled in at the end of the shift documents nothing except that somebody knew there should have been one.
- The person signing has been to look. A permit signed from an office for a space nobody stood next to is worse than no permit, because it makes everyone downstream believe a check happened.
- It expires. A confined space permit is for the conditions at the time of the test. Break for lunch and the atmosphere is a question again — 1910.146 requires the space to be reevaluated and the entry cancelled when conditions change.
- If the job changes, the permit does not cover it. Different pipe, different room, different method, different day. New permit.
- It is available at the work. On the space, at the panel, at the hot work. Not filed.

HOT WORK

1926.352 is the one every trade hits:

- Move the work to a safe place if you can. If you cannot, move the fire hazards. If you cannot do that either, confine the heat, sparks and slag and protect what will not move.
- Suitable extinguishing equipment immediately available and ready for instant use — 1926.352(d).
- A fire watch where anything could catch, who does nothing else, and who stays after the work stops. Most hot work fires are found long after the welder went home, which is why the watch continues for at least half an hour and the area is checked again after that.
- No hot work where flammable paint is being applied, where flammable compounds are present, or in heavy dust — 1926.352(c).

WHO CAN STOP IT

Anybody. The permit sets conditions; when a condition is no longer true — the alarm sounds, the fan stops, the wind changes, the watch has to leave — the work stops and the permit is void. That is not an escalation, it is how the system is designed to work.

If somebody hands you a permit and you cannot see the checks on it that make it true, that is a question, and asking it is exactly what the permit is for.

ASK THE CREW

- Is any work today under a permit, and has anyone read it?
- Who signs hot work permits here, and do they come and look?
- If a permit expired mid-job, would the work actually stop?

29 CFR 1910.146 · 29 CFR 1926.352 · 29 CFR 1910.147

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Permits and Who Signs Them

About 8 minutes to deliver · 29 CFR 1910.146 · 29 CFR 1926.352 · 29 CFR 1910.147

Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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