

Is Your Permit-to-Work System Safe Under Pressure?

A 3-Minute Pressure Test for Permit Systems

Most permit-to-work systems look fine on paper.

Procedures exist.

Permits get completed.

Audits come back clean.

Incidents still happen.

They happen on sites where the permit system passed every check, because systems are usually reviewed under calm, controlled conditions. Real operations don't stay that way.

Work becomes routine. Time pressure shortens decisions. Activities start overlapping across the site. Then someone re-energises a system before everyone's clear.

The **Permit System Pressure Test** identifies early signals that your system may not hold up when things get busy.

It takes three minutes.

The Permit System Pressure Test

Work through the questions below. If several answers are uncertain, your system is more exposed than it looks.

Systems Conditions

Does the structure of the permit system support safe coordination of work?

1. Permit Visibility

Can supervisors see all active permits and work locations across the site at a glance?

2. SIMOPS Awareness

When multiple permits are running, is there a clear method for identifying where activities interact?

3. Isolation Verification

Are isolation points physically confirmed before work starts — not just signed off?

4. Restart Control

Is restart treated as a controlled phase, or does re-energisation happen once paperwork is done?

5. Responsibility Clarity

When multiple teams are involved, is it unambiguous who controls the permit?

Operational Pressure

Does the system behave the same way when work activity increases?

6. Time Pressure

When production is waiting, do the same verification steps still happen?

7. Routine Familiarity

When a job is done every week, does it still get the same level of challenge?

8. Issuer Challenge

Do permit issuers actually question the job plan before issuing, or process it?

9. Shift Handover

When a permit transfers between shifts, does the incoming team understand what's actually happening on the job?

10. Changing Conditions

If conditions change mid-job, is there a clear trigger to stop and reassess the permit?

Interpreting the Results

Most sites will flag several of these.

That's expected.

Permit systems don't usually fail because procedures are missing. They fail when pressure quietly changes how those procedures get applied.

The early warning signs tend to look like this:

- routine jobs stop getting challenged
- isolations get assumed rather than verified
- overlapping activities catch nobody's attention until something goes wrong
- shift handovers lose the context that actually matters
- restart gets treated as an admin step

None of this shows up in a documentation audit. All of it shapes how the system behaves during real work.

Looking Deeper

The **Permit System Pressure Test** surfaces signals. It's not a diagnosis.

The Permit System Diagnostic Toolkit works through the full permit lifecycle in detail, issuer behaviour, isolation practices, SIMOPS coordination, handover integrity, restart and re-energisation controls.

It gives you a structured method to assess what's actually happening on your site.

👉 [View the Permit System Diagnostic Toolkit](#)