OPS-08 (v2) – HOT WORK ON VESSELS – ASSURANCE PROCEDURE (2026)

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Review Cycle: Every 3 years

Document Owner: Harbour Master

1. PURPOSE

This procedure ensures that the Port of Sunderland is satisfied that any vessel carrying out hot work has implemented all required controls, testing, isolation, fire-watching, and emergency arrangements in accordance with:

- ISM Code and vessel's SMS
- The Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers (COSWP) – latest edition
- IMO Hot Work Safety Guidelines
- UK HSE / Docks ACOP requirements
- IACS & Class requirements for hot work

The vessel retains full responsibility for planning, testing, supervising, and safely executing hot work.

The Port's role is to confirm that the vessel has declared full compliance and that port-side interface risks are controlled.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all vessels within Port of Sunderland limits undertaking Hot Work, including but not limited to:

- welding,
- burning,
- flame-cutting,
- brazing,
- grinding producing sparks,
- use of blowlamps/burners,
- any ignition-capable tool.

This applies whether work is conducted on deck, in machinery spaces, cargo areas, tanks, voids, or shore-side alongside the vessel.

Excluded:

Hot work conducted in an approved dry-dock repair facility, where the facility's own Hot Work controls apply.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Vessel Master / Operator

The Master is responsible for:

Completing a task-specific hot-work risk assessment.

- Ensuring the area is gas-free, ventilated, and tested using calibrated equipment (O_2, flammable gas %LEL, toxic gases if relevant).
- Ensuring isolation of all flammable or hazardous systems (valves, cargo lines, electrical sources, vapour spaces).
- Ensuring hot-work personnel are trained and competent.
- Providing a designated fire-watch (with continuous presence and post-work cooldown watch).
- Preparing a documented emergency / fire-response plan including location of nearest fire equipment and communications.
- Submitting the Hot Work Declaration Form prior to work starting.
- Notifying Harbour Control on VHF Ch. 14 before work begins and when work is complete.

3.2 Port of Sunderland

The Port will:

- Review the Master's declaration form for completeness.
- Assess port-side interface risks, such as:
- bunkering,
- cargo operations,
- flammable materials nearby,
- incompatible work (e.g., enclosed-space entry).
- Approve, approve with conditions, or refuse the request.

- Retain records of all Hot Work declarations for 5 years.

- Conduct inspections if required for assurance or in high-risk situations.

The Port does not carry out technical supervision, atmosphere tests, or direct safety management of hot work.

The vessel is fully accountable.

4. CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL

Approval may be delayed, conditioned, or refused if:

- Bunkering or flammable cargo operations are underway or imminent.
- Vessel mooring or stability is not secure. Wind or weather present unacceptable risk of fire spread.
- The vessel cannot provide full atmospheric testing records.
- Rescue / firefighting arrangements are unclear or inadequate.
- Work is proposed in hazardous tank/void spaces without full isolation and gas-free certification.
- There are port operations nearby involving ignition risks or flammable materials.

5. PROCEDURE

Step 1 – Vessel prepares hot-work plan

Including: RA, atmosphere testing, isolation, ventilation, equipment readiness, PPE, fire-watch plan, emergency plan.

Step 2 – Vessel submits the Declaration Form

Submit to Harbour Office / Marine Operations.

Step 3 – Port review & decision

Approve / approve with conditions / refuse.

Check berth conditions, nearby operations, and port-side risks.

Step 4 – Vessel notifies Harbour Control before starting

VHF Ch. 11/14.

Step 5 – During Hot Work

The vessel must ensure:

Continuous fire-watch

Continuous availability of extinguishers / hose lines

Continuous VHF watch on Ch. 14

Compliance with any conditions imposed

Step 6 – Completion

Vessel notifies Harbour Control on Ch. 14

Fire-watch remains for 30–60 minutes cooldown monitoring

Permit filed and retained for 5 years

APPENDIX A – VESSEL HOT WORK DECLARATION (Master's Assurance Form)

A. Vessel Details

Vessel Name: _____

IMO No.: _____

Berth / Location: _____

Area of Hot Work: _____

Nature of Work: _____

Planned Start (Date/Time): _____

Estimated Finish (Date/Time): _____

B. Master's Safety Declarations

(All must be confirmed "Yes" for approval)

I, the Master (or authorised officer), hereby declare that:

Atmospheric Safety

☐ Space/area has been gas-tested using calibrated equipment.

☐ Readings confirm:

- Oxygen ≥ 20.9%
- Flammable gases < 1% LEL
- Toxic gases (H_2S/CO etc.) below limits

☐ Area is certified gas-free where applicable and certificate attached.

☐ Continuous monitoring or periodic re-testing will be carried out where required.

Hazard Isolation

☐ All flammable liquids, vapours, residues removed or isolated.

☐ Lines, valves, pipes, tanks connected to the area are isolated/blanked/LOTO.

☐ Ventilation is adequate and will be maintained.

Fire Safety

☐ Fire-watch posted during the entire activity.

☐ Fire-watch trained and equipped with extinguishers and communications.

☐ Fire-watch will remain for 30–60 minutes after completion.

☐ Suitable extinguishers, hose lines or fire equipment are in place.

Personnel Safety & Competence

☐ Welders/technicians are competent and trained.

☐ PPE (gloves, goggles/face shield, clothing, hearing protection) is available and used.

☐ Supervising officer appointed and present.

Emergency Preparedness

☐ A Hot-Work Emergency Plan has been prepared, including communication and response actions.

☐ No conflicting operations will occur (cargo, bunkering, tank cleaning, gas freeing).

Port Communications

☐ Harbour Radio (VHF Ch.14) will be notified at start and finish.

☐ Work will stop immediately if instructed by Harbour Control.

C. Master's Signature

Name: _____

Rank: _____

Signature: _____

Date/Time: _____

D. Port of Sunderland – Approval

Interface risks checked

Berth conditions acceptable

No incompatible operations ongoing

☐ Approved

☐ Approved with conditions (below)

☐ Refused (reasons below)

Conditions / Comments:

Harbour Master / Deputy:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date/Time: _____

E. Notifications (VHF Ch.11/14)

Start reported: _____ (time)

Completion reported: _____ (time)