Excavation Permit Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to detail the minimum health and safety standards and controls that Contractors and employees must follow when carrying out any work that could affect buried, concealed, or overhead services, or when undertaking excavation or intrusive ground-breaking activities on premises owned or operated by London Luton Airport Operations Limited (LLAOL).

The aim is to prevent service strikes, avoid harm to people, and protect critical airport infrastructure, while also managing wider risks associated with excavations such as collapse, ground instability, undermining structures, and people or equipment falling into open excavations.

2. Scope

LLAOL Excavation & Service Avoidance Permits can be issued for a maximum of **one week**.

Applies to all works where there is a risk of contacting, exposing, or damaging services, or where the ground, structure, or fabric of a building is broken, disturbed, or penetrated.

This includes:

- Utilities,
- Services within walls, floors and ceilings,
- Overhead lines
- Any other concealed or exposed service that could be affected by the work.

It also covers all excavation activities, regardless of depth or method, including but not limited to:

- Mechanical excavation
- Hand digging
- Trial holes
- Trenching
- Coring
- Drilling
- Chasing
- Fixing
- Any other intrusive work that could compromise service integrity or structural stability.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. Contractor

- Apply for permits in accordance with the scope of works, this can be raised as many times as required on the weekly basis of the project attached to the original work authorisation.

- Provide sufficient supporting documentation. Including but not limited to:
- Risk assessments
- Method statements
- Emergency/rescue plans
- Evidence of competency
- Equipment documentation/certification

The person in charge on concerto and site must be the one answering the questions to the permit issuer for the permit to be open issued.

3.2. Control of Contractors Office (COCO)

- Undertake an initial review of the contractor's permit submission to ensure times, dates and locations are correct and existence of all required supporting documentation.

3.3. Technical Approvers (Field Experts)

- Review the high-risk permit, including but not limited to:
  - Method statement/safe system of work
  - Risk assessment(s)
  - Emergency/rescue plans
  - Competency evidence
  - Equipment documentation/certification

The Technical approver will give a desktop authorisation of the high-risk permit.

3.4. LLA Point of Work Issuers

- Issue permits at the point of works, undertaking a set of questions that is set on the orchestrate application or concerto webpage, this is for opening an issuing the permit and for closing and completing.

3.5. Compliance and H&S

Manage the systems that support these works and audit periodically against works being conducted, alongside the pre validation checklist answered daily by the person in charge on the high-risk permit.

4. Requirement for Ground-Breaking & Intrusive Works

4.1 General Requirements

- Contractors must follow LLAOL's service-clearance procedures before any ground is broken or any intrusive work is carried out. These requirements must be reflected in the RAMS and highlighted in the hazards/precautions section on CMS.
- A valid Excavation & Service Avoidance Permit must be authorised and issued by the Point of Work Issuer (POWI) before any excavation, drilling, coring, chasing, or penetration works begin.
- All personnel involved must be provided with up-to-date utility plans, drawings, and construction information, these documents must be submitted with the permit application.
- Any work within 3 metres of 11kV or 415V electrical services, or gas mains, must be hand-dug, and services should be isolated were reasonably practicable.
- Any work within 500mm of other services (or 1000mm for gas) must also be hand-dug.
- Contractors must ensure that their operatives understand the service layout, the limitations of the plans, and the need to proceed cautiously even where services are expected to be absent.
- Newly discovered or previously uncharted services must be protected, clearly identified, and reported to the LLAOL Company Representative. Updated plans must be provided on completion.
- In the event of any service strike or suspected damage, the Contractor must immediately make the area safe and notify both the LLAOL Company Representative and the service owner.
- Contractor operatives always remain under the control of the named person in charge while on site.

4.2 Excavations and Groundbreaking Activities

- Excavations must be planned to prevent collapse, undermining of structures, or risk to people and equipment. This includes assessing ground conditions, depth, and proximity to buildings, roads, and plant.
- Open excavations must be protected with barriers, edge protection, or other suitable controls to prevent people, vehicles, or equipment from falling in.
- Trial holes and service-exposure works must be carried out carefully, using hand tools where required, and must follow the agreed method.
- Water ingress, unstable ground, or unexpected conditions must be reported immediately and the excavation made safe before work continues.
- Outside the airport boundary, Contractors must contact all relevant service providers directly to obtain service information. Evidence of these clearances must be submitted with the permit application.

4.3 Wall, Floor, and Ceiling Penetrations

- Before drilling, coring, or fixing into any wall, floor, or ceiling, Contractors must confirm the presence and location of concealed services using drawings, service information, and appropriate detection equipment.
- Penetrations must follow the approved method and must not proceed until the risk of striking electrical, communications, fire-main, HVAC, or other services has been assessed and controlled.
- Any deviation from the agreed penetration location must be re-checked and re-approved before work continues.

4.4 Working Near Overhead Services

- Work near overhead power lines, comms cables, or other elevated services must be planned to maintain safe clearance distances and prevent contact by people, plant, or equipment.
- Where overhead lines present a risk, physical controls such as goalposts, barriers, or exclusion zones must be established.
- Deliveries, plant movements, and lifting operations near overhead services must be supervised and controlled to prevent accidental encroachment.

4.5 Protection of Services and Airport Infrastructure

- All exposed or newly installed services must be protected from damage during the works and clearly identified before backfilling or covering.
- Any temporary supports, coverings, or markers must remain in place until the area is reinstated and signed off.

5 Support and Guidance

For further information and guidance regarding ground-breaking and intrusive works, or any other works near airport services can be sought from the Technical Services Department.

6 Assurance

LLAOL will conduct continuous improvement tours and periodic audits against this process, and on works being conducted at LLAOL, with more focus on high-risk activities, such as ground-breaking and intrusive works. This will be shared with all stake holders on a minimum of a monthly basis. This will also be reported in both Local Safety Forums and Risk Management Group meetings.