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Tramway safety

Last Modified April 18, 2024



The guidelines below are for businesses, contractors and others working on or near the tramway.

Working on or near the tramway

All activities or events occurring alongside or potentially affecting the Tramway **MUST have a 'Permit to Work' PRIOR** to commencement. This ensures the necessary information is gathered and reviewed before the works or events begin.

Any 'Permit to Work' which is granted will be only be given where there is minimal impact to the tramway.

A 'Permit to Work' is needed for any of the below activities:

- Any work where any part of the site, any tools or materials, any machine, suspended load, or any person, could come within the swept path.
- Any work involving use of a ladder or window cleaning poles, where any part of the equipment could come within the 2m space measured horizontally to a point vertically above the nearest tramway rail.
- Any work which will force traffic or pedestrians to be diverted onto a tram line (because of road or footway occupation)
- Piling or excavation over 2m deep with a risk of rendering the roadway or the tramway unstable.
- Any excavation within 3m of any tramway structure including poles and spanning wires supporting overhead wires.
- Erecting and dismantling scaffolding or use of a crane, within 5m of the nearest tram rail or overhead wires including spanning wires.
- Any work where any structure or equipment will be placed above the overhead line.
- Even if the site itself is outside the 2m distance from the nearest tram rail, authorisation will still be required if vehicles fitted with cranes, tipping bodies or skip loaders could come within this distance when this equipment is in use.
- Authorisation is also required if abnormal vehicle loading or static loading is placed on the track.
- Work that have an effect on traffic flow through a signalised junction used by the trams.

Contact

To obtain a Permit to Work please contact the tramway safety officer at:

- Telephone: 01253 476145
- Email: tso@blackpool.gov.uk

The information below outlines the main risks and the methods of preventing injury to you, your colleagues or contractors, the tram crews, passengers and members of the general public.

There are two main areas of risk:

- Collision with Tramcar
- Electrocution

Note: the tramway is very quiet and vibration free. Be aware of your surroundings

Risk of collision with tramcar

It is important to appreciate that unlike other traffic a tramcar cannot swerve around a person or obstruction placed in its path.

Furthermore it must be realised that a tramcar is much wider than the tracks on which it operates. It is, however, very easy to define the path of the vehicle and therefore the danger zone.

This danger zone is referred to as the SWEPT PATH, for the entire length of the tramway; the SWEPT PATH is defined by one or more of the following:

- Solid White Line or dotted yellow line
- Kerb
- Tramway fencing

Vehicles must be kept clear of SWEPT PATH at all times, including loading and unloading.

Risk of electric shock

The overhead line (OHLE) that powers the Tramcars is energised at 600 volts DC and is potentially extremely dangerous.

It is vital that **ALL OVERHEAD LINE EQUIPMENT IS TREATED AS LIVE AT ALL TIMES**

The 'Permit to Work' to work will allow you to safely operate near to the tramway;

- Nothing must be used within two metres (6.6 feet) of the overhead line or vertically above it. Special attention is drawn to the use of scaffolds, window cleaning, and roof repairs, or maintenance to nearby buildings or street lighting. Special care must be taken to ensure that items of plant e.g. Hiabs, Excavators, Cranes etc. are not used in this area.
- Ladders used adjacent to live overhead lines **MUST** be made of wood or other non-conductive material and no longer than 2 metres.

Underground cables

In addition to the usual utilities underground apparatus found on work sites the Tramway is supplied by an extensive network of underground cables carrying the 600 volts DC. The equipment is often located outside the swept path markings. It is essential therefore that all cables are located before excavation commences.

Contact should be made with Blackpool Council Highways & Traffic department in order to obtain the appropriate permissions to excavate in the highway, email HighwaysandTraffic@blackpool.gov.uk.

Working in the highway

All work in the highway must be protected to at least the standard required by [Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual](#).

However, when road works are carried out on a street, which also contains a Tramway, difficulties may be experienced in meeting the traffic control, safety zones and barrier requirements.

The site interface between the tramway and the work area must be protected by barriers set at least 500mm away from the swept path. Detailed advice covering these circumstances may be obtained from the tramway safety officer by emailing tso@blackpool.gov.uk.

Emergency procedures

Whilst working on or near to the Tramway, emergencies may arise – you may well be the first person on the scene. It is important therefore that you are able to take the right action quickly.

Contact

In case of an emergency on or near the tramway, please contact:

- Emergency Services Dial 999
- Blackpool Transport Services Tel: 01253 473136 between the hours of 05:00am - 01:00am, or call 01253 473052 outside of these hours.

NEVER ATTEMPT TO RECOVER EQUIPMENT OR TO RESCUE PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE OVERHEAD LINE SYSTEM

Anyone working on or near the tramway that causes unintentional contact with any tramway infrastructure must advise the tramway safety officer immediately by calling 01253 476145.

Further information in regard to working in proximity to power lines and cables can be found in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) [Guidance Note GS6 Avoiding Danger from Overhead Power Lines](#).

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Blackpool Council

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