

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	Purpose	4
1.2	Definitions	4
1.3	Background	5
1.4	Costs and Benefits	5
1.5	Legislation	6
2	ROADS SERVICE POLICY & PROCEDURE	8
2.1	General provision	8
2.2	Considerations before issuing access permits	9
2.3	Display of permits	10
2.4	Revocation of permits	10
2.5	Residents' access permit	10
2.6	Church access permit	11
2.7	Off-street car parking access permit	12
2.8	Banking access permit	12
2.9	Business access permit	13
2.10	Essential maintenance / essential repairs to buildings access permit	13
2.11	Disabled persons' access permit	14
2.12	Community transport access permit	15
2.13	Miscellaneous access permit	16
2.14	Replacement and returned permits	16
2.15	Change of details	17
2.16	Renewals	17
2.17	Appeals	17
3	EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)	18
3.1	Equality Impact Assessment Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998	18

4	REFERENCES	19
4.1	General References	19
5	APPENDICES	20
5.1	Appendix 1 General guidance notes	20
5.2	Appendix 2 Guidance for applicants and frequently asked questions (FAQs)	23
5.3	Appendix 3 Sample application form	31
5.4	Appendix 4 Sample letters to applicants	33
5.5	Appendix 5 Orders implementing restricted zones	38
6	CONTROL SHEET - ROADS SERVICE POLICY & PROCEDURE GUIDE : E039	42

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Roads Service Policy & Procedure Guide (RSPPG): -

1.1.1.1 is directed to all staff involved in the issue and management of permits for vehicular access into restricted zones; and

1.1.1.2 sets out procedure to be followed when assessing applications and issuing restricted zone access permits.

1.2 Definitions

Restricted zone – road or street named in a Prohibition of Traffic Order or Extinguishment of Right to Use Vehicles on Roads Order

Access permit – an authorisation issued by the Department for Regional Development Roads Service permitting vehicles to use the roads described as restricted zones

Long-term permit – valid for a period of up to 12 months from the date of issue

Short-term permit – valid for a maximum period of 2 weeks from the date of issue

Applicant – an individual or an individual representing a business or organisation

Issuing Officer – member of Roads Service staff who assesses applications and issues access permits

RTO – Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 ^(4.1.1)

Planning Order – Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 and the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 ^(4.1.2 & 3)

TRO – Traffic Regulation Order

Bank – a business establishment in which money is kept for saving or commercial purposes or is invested, supplied for loans, or exchanged

Church – a building designated and set aside for public forms of worship, irrespective of religious affiliation

RoadsMap – online tool used to access and view digital Ordnance Survey maps through the Roads Service Intranet

Goods vehicle – a motor vehicle constructed or adapted for use for the carriage of goods, or a trailer so constructed or adapted

Residence – a domestic or non-domestic property listed in the Valuation and Lands Agency valuation list

(see http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps/index/property_valuation/valuation-of-property/valuation-lists.htm)

Resident – a person who normally resides at a residence that has its primary parking area within the limits of the restricted zone

1.3 Background

By virtue of the Department's (Transfer and Assignment of Functions) Order (NI) 1999 ^(4.1.4), the powers in Articles 100, 101 and 103 (part) of the Planning Order, in relation to the making and administration of pedestrian schemes, transferred to the Department for Regional Development with effect from 1 December 1999, with day-to-day responsibility for the statutory processes and administration falling to Roads Service.

A Memorandum of Understanding on Pedestrian Zones (see <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=9155>) drawn up in August 2003 identified a number of anomalies in relation to who was best positioned to take the lead in dealing with the operation of pedestrian zones, making or modifying orders and funding new schemes.

The memorandum stated:

1.3.1.1 While Roads Service is now responsible for the statutory processing and administration of pedestrian zones, it is acknowledged that Roads Service will seldom be in a position to take the lead in anything other than traffic and transport matters. Pedestrian zones, which more often than not are synonymous with environmental improvement schemes, are outside Roads Service's area of expertise. Roads Service will often need the support of the Planning Service, the Department of Social Development or possibly both when making new orders or adjusting existing orders.

1.3.1.2 A 'joined up approach' has been agreed as the best way forward with Roads Service relying on the expertise of DSD and Planning Service to put forward specific cases for pedestrian zones including dealing with objections and public enquiries etc. In general any response to a request for making or adjusting orders would be a collective decision with the most appropriate organisation taking the lead depending on the circumstances.

1.4 Costs and Benefits

Roads Service will wish to take account of the cost implications of applying the policy and / or procedures in this RSPPG. They will also wish to be aware of the anticipated benefits to be derived.

The anticipated costs arising from implementation of this RSPPG are: -

1.4.1.1 administration costs in the production of guidance notes for applicants and permit holders (see Appendix 1 General guidance notes and Appendix 2 Guidance for applicants and frequently asked questions (FAQs)) and the production of a new Roads Service wide application form and standard letters (see Appendix 3 Sample application form and Appendix 4 Sample letters to applicants). This would be a one-off task, with the roll-out of new forms and guidance notes taking place over a 12 month period following the implementation of the RSPPG;

1.4.1.2 additional costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the restricted zone access permit scheme such as the distribution of new guidance notes to accompany all future application forms. At the date of issue of this RSPPG approx. 750 access permits issued by Roads Service were in circulation throughout Northern Ireland; and

1.4.1.3 training costs to update existing staff on the new procedures set out in this policy. This will be a one-off expense and where possible training should be provided on the job.

The anticipated benefits deriving from the implementation of this RSPPG are: -

1.4.1.4 a saving in staff time when answering queries from members of the public due to the addition of clear, concise guidance notes for applicants (see Appendix 2 Guidance for applicants and frequently asked questions (FAQs)). The magnitude of this saving will vary depending on zone size, population, use and layout;

1.4.1.5 a more straightforward and informative method of applying for access permits for members of the public; and

1.4.1.6 better informed staff who can provide a more structured, consistent approach to the issue and management of access permits throughout all Roads Service divisions.

1.5 Legislation

At the date of issue of this RSPPG, over 70 orders existed throughout Northern Ireland restricting the use of vehicles on certain roads. The majority of these have been introduced under the Planning Order, with only 3 orders being introduced under the RTO (see Appendix 5 Orders implementing restricted zones).

Exemptions within these orders permit certain vehicles to use the specified roads. It is within these exemptions that Roads Service has the power to issue authorisations permitting vehicles to use the roads described in a TRO or Extinguishment of Right to Use Vehicles on Roads Order.

When considering a vehicular access application for any restricted zone the relevant order shall be consulted to ensure that all restrictions and / or exemptions are taken into account. For details of all orders current at the date of issue of this RSPPG, and contact details where copies of orders may be obtained, see Appendix 5 Orders implementing restricted zones.

2 Roads Service Policy & Procedure

2.1 General provision

Access permits for vehicle access to a restricted zone may be granted to: -

2.1.1.1 residents of properties adjacent to the restricted zone where the only form of access to the property is through the zone;

2.1.1.2 churches, where ministers, elders, etc require access through the restricted zone for the conveyance of equipment / goods in connection with the church;

2.1.1.3 businesses and / or individuals (not covered under residents' access) for off-street parking where the only form of access is through the restricted zone;

2.1.1.4 businesses and / or individuals for banking within the restricted zone, where large sums of money and / or the volume / weight of coins make it unsafe or impractical to visit the bank by other means;

2.1.1.5 wedding car companies or undertakers / funeral homes who in exceptional circumstances require access into or through the restricted zone, outside the hours of loading and unloading as specified in the order;

2.1.1.6 tradesmen / workmen carrying out essential repair work / essential maintenance within the restricted zone outside the hours of loading and unloading as specified in the order;

2.1.1.7 disabled persons accessing facilities and / or services within the restricted zone;

2.1.1.8 local community transport providers and other such groups who provide essential transport services to persons having severe mobility impairment or who live in areas with limited public transport services; and

2.1.1.9 individuals, in exceptional circumstances where the Issuing Officer feels that access is required, but is not covered by any of the above.

Permits shall cover: -

2.1.1.10 access to specified restricted zones and shall not be transferable from one zone to another; and

2.1.1.11 specified vehicles and, with the exception of disabled persons' access permits, shall not be transferable to vehicles not detailed on the permit.

A disabled person's access permit may be issued in respect of a vehicle for which the applicant is not the registered keeper. For example, a disabled person who may not hold a driving licence or whose disability may prevent them from driving a car, may require an access permit for use with a vehicle registered to a friend or family member.

With the exception of disabled persons' access permits, all applicants must provide proof of ownership or usage of the vehicle whether or not they are the registered keeper. This shall be in the form of a current driver's licence together with one of the following: -

- a) the Registration Document;
- b) a copy of the vehicle insurance documentation;
- c) a copy of a hiring / leasing agreement, together with a letter from the employer where appropriate; or
- d) for company owned vehicles, a typed letter on headed paper & signed by the Company Secretary confirming that the vehicle is made available to the applicant for daily use.

A vehicle displaying an access permit shall not be permitted to use a restricted zone for any longer period than may be necessary. **Possession of a valid permit is not an entitlement to park within a restricted zone.**

All applications including postal and annual renewals shall only be accepted where they are supported by original documentation.

All postal applications for access permits shall be treated as enquiries and shall be subject to the normal 15 working day response. However, every effort should be made to deal with the application within 5 working days.

Counter applications shall normally be subject to the 15 working day response. Only in exceptional circumstances and at the Issuing Officer's discretion shall applications be processed while the applicant waits.

2.2 Considerations before issuing access permits

The following shall be taken into consideration by the Issuing Officer when assessing applications for access permits: -

2.2.1.1 alternative solutions which will satisfy the reason for which the application has been made, without issuing a permit (e.g. the use of Shopmobility or community transport schemes for disabled persons);

2.2.1.2 the number of access permits already issued for the zone in question, and the impact of issuing further permits on the safety and effectiveness of the zone;

2.2.1.3 restricting the hours of validity of the permit (e.g. 09:00-11:00 for business access) to reduce conflict between vehicles and vulnerable users such as pedestrians;

2.2.1.4 retaining access and clear passage for emergency service vehicles travelling into and / or through the restricted zone;

2.2.1.5 physical obstructions such as street furniture, layout of premises and width / height constraints within the zone which may impede on the passage of vehicles; and

2.2.1.6 physical obstructions or restrictions which may limit access for disabled persons, such as position of street furniture, gradients of footways, etc. For further guidance refer to [RSPPG E037](#) Advice on good practice for the provision of walking infrastructure ^(4.1.5), which introduces “Inclusive Mobility, A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure”.

2.3 Display of permits

Permits shall be displayed on the inside surface of the windscreen or a side window facing the kerb, or placed on the dashboard area immediately below the windscreen so that the particulars recorded on the front of the permit are clearly visible to a person standing at the front or side of the vehicle.

2.4 Revocation of permits

Permits may be revoked where: -

2.4.1.1 the applicant’s circumstances no longer confer eligibility for a permit; or

2.4.1.2 the permit is fraudulently used; or

2.4.1.3 a replacement permit has been issued in its place.

2.5 Residents’ access permit

Long-term permits shall be available for residents’ access subject to the following limitations: -

2.5.1.1 In making an application for a resident’s access permit, a resident shall provide proof of residency. This may take the form of a current: -

a) Northern Ireland or Great Britain full driving licence or a Northern Ireland provisional licence, each bearing the photograph of the holder; or

b) passport; or

c) Senior Citizen's SmartPass issued under the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme; or

d) electoral identity card.

If none of the above indicates residency matching that of the application, then further additional proof shall be required in the form of a: -

e) current rent book; or

f) utility or rates bill issued within the last six months.

2.5.1.2 Dwellings having vehicular access from streets or roads outside the restricted zone shall not be eligible for a residents' access permit.

2.5.1.3 A person who temporarily resides at a residence (i.e. cannot provide any of the items listed in paragraph 2.5.1.1) shall not qualify for a permit.

2.5.1.4 A residents' access permit shall only entitle the permit holder to access their property.

2.6 Church access permit

Long-term permits shall be available for church access subject to the following limitations: -

2.6.1.1 Applications may be considered from individuals (e.g. ministers, elders, etc.) involved in church work, which requires them to use a vehicle on a daily or weekly basis for the conveyance of goods and / or equipment to and from a church / church hall.

2.6.1.2 The church premises must be accessed solely from a road / street within the restricted zone.

2.6.1.3 In making an application for a church access permit, an applicant shall provide proof of need for the permit in the form of a typed letter on headed paper from the church confirming that vehicle access is required.

2.6.1.4 A maximum of three access permits may be issued to a church, with the option of including two additional vehicle registrations on each permit.

Applications shall not be considered from members of the congregation to attend services. Applications from persons wishing to apply for church access due to disability or limited mobility shall be treated as applications for disabled persons' permits, and shall therefore be subject to the relevant conditions and restrictions as set out in section 2.1.

2.7 Off-street car parking access permit

Long-term permits shall be available for access to private off-street parking facilities subject to the following limitations: -

2.7.1.1 The parking facility must be accessed solely from a road / street within the restricted zone.

2.7.1.2 Proof of usage of the parking facility shall be required in the form of: -

- a) a typed letter on headed paper, signed by the car park owner or representative confirming that the applicant is entitled to use the car park and requires access to it on a daily basis; or
- b) a copy of a contract or agreement between the applicant or applicant's employer and the owner of the car park, signed by the car park owner or representative confirming that the applicant uses the car park on a regular basis.

Applications for access for off-street parking for residential properties shall be considered under residents' access and shall therefore be subject to the relevant conditions and restrictions as set out in section 2.5.

2.8 Banking access permit

Long and short-term permits shall be available for access into a restricted zone to visit banks subject to the following limitations: -

2.8.1.1 Applications shall only be accepted where the bank is within the restricted zone (e.g. postcode, street name, etc). Proof of the bank's address shall be required in the form of a letter from the bank on headed paper including the branch address, confirming that the applicant is a customer of the bank.

2.8.1.2 Applications shall only be accepted from individuals who bank over £5,000, and / or a high percentage of coins, per visit. A letter from the bank confirming this and the frequency of lodgements shall be required as proof.

2.8.1.3 Long-term permits may be issued where an individual or business requires access to the bank at least once a month. Short-term permits may be issued for one-off occasion's e.g. depositing funds or proceeds from fundraisers, charity events, etc.

2.8.1.4 A maximum waiting time of 15 minutes shall be imposed on vehicles displaying a banking access permit in the restricted zone.

Where two or more vehicles alternate on a regular basis to visit the bank (for security reasons), then the registrations of all vehicles, up to a maximum of 3, shall be submitted with the application form for inclusion on the permit.

2.9 Business access permit

Business access permits may be issued to wedding car companies or undertakers / funeral homes subject to the following limitations: -

2.9.1.1 Wedding car companies may be eligible for long-term access permits where they can prove that they require access to: -

- a) their own premises, where these premises are accessed through the restricted zone (proof of address shall be required in the form of a letter from the company on headed paper);
- b) a residence whose only vehicular access is through the restricted zone;
or
- c) a church where the desired vehicular access is through the restricted zone.

2.9.1.2 Undertakers and funeral homes may be eligible for long-term access permits subject to the conditions set out in 2.9.1.1, where the term residence includes buildings such as residential / care homes for the elderly and hospitals / hospices.

A maximum of three access permits may be issued to each business, with the option of including two additional vehicle registrations on each permit.

A valid reason must be submitted with the application form for requesting additional registrations on a permit.

2.10 Essential maintenance / essential repairs to buildings access permit

Short-term permits may be available for essential maintenance (usually one-off items) and essential repair work on buildings subject to the following limitations: -

2.10.1.1 Permits may only be issued where: -

- a) the location of the work is within the restricted zone; and / or
- b) the only access is from a road / street within the restricted zone.

2.10.1.2 Proof of need to carry out work shall be required in the form of: -

- a) a copy of a contract or agreement between the applicant and the employer, signed and dated by the employer; or
- b) where no formal contract exists, a typed letter on headed paper signed and dated by the employer confirming that the applicant is employed to carry out essential maintenance or repairs on the named premises.

2.10.1.3 The applicant shall state the required hours of access on the application form and shall include a typed letter on headed paper signed by the employer confirming that access is required during these hours.

2.10.1.4 Permits shall only be granted where the Issuing Officer is satisfied that the work cannot be carried out during the permitted loading and unloading times as specified in the order. Planned building refurbishment works should be scheduled in such a manner that the need for access permits will be the exception rather than the rule.

2.10.1.5 Every effort shall be made to restrict the hours of access as much as possible. Only essential vehicles shall be granted access and vehicle access times should be kept to a minimum for loading and unloading.

2.10.1.6 A maximum of three access permits may be issued to each company / contractor, with the option of including two additional vehicle registrations on each permit.

2.11 Disabled persons' access permit

Section 2.11 does not apply to restricted zones within Belfast City Centre. (An exemption applies within Belfast which allows a motor vehicle lawfully displaying a disabled persons badge unrestricted access to Donegall Place, Castle Place and parts of Castle Street and High Street without an authorisation permit. On all other streets within the Belfast City Centre restricted zone, permit holder access is not provided for disabled persons.)

Approximately 70% of persons with a disability have walking difficulties. This can vary from not being able to walk short distances (e.g. 400 yards/ 366 metres) without stopping or severe discomfort, to not being able to walk any distance at all. Mobility impairment can limit the distance some disabled people can walk in a pedestrian environment, increasing the importance of access by car. Issuing Officers shall take account of these factors when assessing applications from disabled people.

Disabled persons may be eligible for long-term permits to access services and / or facilities within the restricted zone subject to the following limitations: -

2.11.1.1 The applicant must be in possession of a current valid Blue Badge issued through the Disabled Persons Badge Scheme. Proof of this shall be required in the form of a photocopy of the badge or production of the badge in person at the local issuing office.

2.11.1.2 Disabled persons' access permits shall allow access as follows:

- General access will be allowed into all zones up until 11.00am Monday to Saturday.
- An additional 4 hours per week, during afternoons, outside specific loading/unloading times and granted in 2 hour slots, would be available by

application, to facilitate those blue badge holders who found the general morning access time up to 11.00am to be unsuitable.

- Exceptionally where these increased access times did not suit and cases of extreme hardship were established, every effort should be made to treat applications for access outside these times sympathetically. Applications should be made to the local Roads Service Divisional Manager or other officer nominated by him.
- Applications for access to zones on Sundays, should not normally present significant problems. However access during busy shopping periods, for example in the run up to Christmas, would require more detailed consideration.

2.11.1.3 An applicant shall specify the reason for access (e.g. shopping, dentist, doctor) along with approx. location. The applicant shall also specify their required times of access on the application form.

2.11.1.4 Issuing Officers should be aware of local Shopmobility and community transport schemes operating in and around the restricted zone, and should encourage their use where possible as an alternative to using a car in the restricted zone.

2.11.1.5 Applicants may apply for further access permits for other restricted zones. A separate application form will be required for each permit and each application shall be assessed on its merit. Issuing Officers shall only issue permits for their individual area.

2.11.1.6 Where the permit holder's preferred method of transport is taxi, the permit may be temporarily transferred to the taxi subject to the following limitations: -

- a) the driver of the taxi must hold a valid taxi driver and PSV licence;
- b) the permit shall only be valid when in use for the carriage of the disabled person; and
- c) the hours of validity as stated on the permit will apply to the taxi.

2.11.1.7 Taxi registrations shall not be required to be included on the permit.

Disabled persons shall be required to display their Blue Badge and access permit together when accessing the restricted zone, whether in a private vehicle or licensed taxi.

2.12 **Community transport access permit**

Long and short-term permits may be available to local community transport providers and other such groups who provide essential door-to-door transport services to persons having severe mobility impairment or who live in areas with limited public transport services.

Permits may be issued subject to the following limitations: -

2.12.1.1 The organisation applying for the permit shall be based in and shall operate within the local council area. Proof of the organisation's address shall be required in the form of a typed letter on headed paper, signed by a representative of the organisation confirming the address.

2.12.1.2 Eligible vehicles shall be registered with Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland under the small bus permit scheme.

2.12.1.3 Use of the permit shall be restricted to conveyance of goods hours as detailed in the relevant order (e.g. 17:00-11:00 or 18:00-11:00).

2.12.1.4 A maximum of three permits may be issued to each organisation.

2.13 Miscellaneous access permit

When a situation arises where an individual requires a restricted zone access permit which is not covered under any of the previous categories e.g. for non-commercial promotional activities such as charity fundraisers, it may be necessary to issue a miscellaneous access permit subject to the following limitations: -

2.13.1.1 miscellaneous permits shall be issued for short-term use only;

2.13.1.2 the permit application cannot be satisfied by one of the other categories; and

2.13.1.3 the Issuing Officer shall follow guidelines where applicable from one or more of the other permit categories.

Miscellaneous permits shall only be issued at the discretion of the Issuing Officer.

2.14 Replacement and returned permits

A replacement permit may be issued on receipt of an application accompanied by a valid reason why the replacement is required. If a permit has been mislaid and is subsequently found after the issue of a replacement, the original permit shall be returned to the issuing office as soon as possible.

Where permits are no longer required, they shall be returned to the issuing office accompanied by a letter giving the reason for the return.

For replacement long-term permits where the original permit has less than 3 months remaining validity, the replacement permit shall be valid for a period of 12 months from the date of re-issue. Where the original permit has more than 3 months left, the replacement permit shall cover the period on the original permit.

Once a replacement permit is issued, the original permit shall be revoked

2.15 Change of details

Should any of the details on a long-term permit change (e.g. change of vehicle registration), the permit automatically becomes invalid. The permit should be returned to the issuing office immediately along with a new application and accompanying documents (should a new permit be required) giving the amended details and a letter giving the reason for the change.

2.16 Renewals

Renewals of authorisations shall be the responsibility of the individual. Roads Service shall not issue reminders for long-term permits.

The same form shall be used for renewals as for first time applications.

2.17 Appeals

An appeal may be made where an applicant has been refused an access permit. Appeals shall only be accepted in writing and shall be dealt with by the Issuing Officer's line manager.

Appeals shall be subject to the normal 15 working day response.

3 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

An equality screening analysis was carried out on the original policy contained within version 1 of this RSPPG, published in June 2006. The topic addressed was an operational matter. Potential equality implications were considered and no differential impact on any of the groups listed in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 was identified. In consequence, a full equality impact assessment was not considered necessary.

In April 2008, the Department received notification that a formal complaint had been made to the Equality Commission in connection with the impact that application of this policy was having on people with a disability. The notification indicated that this would be the subject of an investigation by the Commission's Statutory Duty Investigations Committee.

In its final report of the investigation (issued in December 2008) the Commission accepted that the Department had complied with the consultation requirements contained in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.4 of its approved Equality Scheme.

However, the Commission recommended that the Department should carry out an Equality Impact Assessment to consider the impact of the policy on people with disabilities, and to consider alternative policies and/or mitigating measures in response to any adverse impacts identified.

A draft EQIA consultation document was issued for public consultation for a 12 week period commencing 8th January 2010.

A final EQIA was published in June 2011 reflecting changes to access times to restricted zones, for Blue Badge holders, following consideration of the responses received to the consultation.

These changes have now been incorporated into this RSPPG at paragraph 2.11.3.2.

4 **References**

4.1 **General References**

Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, published by HMSO

Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972, published by HMSO

Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, published by The Stationary Office

The Departments (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, published by The Stationary Office

RSPPG_E037 Advice on good practice for the provision of walking infrastructure.

5.1 **Appendix 1 General guidance notes**

DEFINITION OF A RESTRICTED ZONE

A restricted zone is a road or street named in a Prohibition of Traffic Order or Extinguishment of Right to Use Vehicles on Roads Order. Restricted zones are commonly known as pedestrian zones, introduced for environmental improvement and to facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians by restricting vehicular access.

DEFINITION OF AN ACCESS PERMIT

An access permit is an authorisation issued by the Department for Regional Development (DRD) Roads Service which permits specific vehicles access to restricted zones at given times.

LOCATIONS WHERE ACCESS PERMITS ARE REQUIRED

An access permit is required when entering a street or road where a Planning or Roads Order is in place excluding vehicular traffic. Towns with restricted zones include: -

1. Antrim;
2. Armagh;
3. Ballymena;
4. Belfast;
5. Carrickfergus;
6. Coleraine;
7. Enniskillen;
8. Limavady;
9. Lisburn;
10. Londonderry;
11. Newtownards; Omagh.

ACCESS PERMIT ELIGIBILITY

If you fall into one of the following categories you may be eligible to apply for a permit:

- **Residents' access permits** – Residents of adjacent properties where the only form of access to the property is through the restricted zone.

- **Church access permit** – Churches, where ministers, elders, etc require access through the restricted zone for the conveyance of equipment / goods in connection with the church.
- **Off-street car parking access permit** – Businesses and / or individuals (not covered under residents' access) for off-street parking where the only form of access is through the restricted zone.
- **Banking access permit** – Businesses and / or individuals for banking within the restricted zone where large sums of money and / or volume / weight of coins make it unsafe or impractical to visit the bank by other means.
- **Business access permit** – Wedding car companies or undertakers / funeral homes who in exceptional circumstances require access into or through the restricted zone, outside the hours of loading and unloading as specified in the order.
- **Essential maintenance / repairs to buildings access permit** – Tradesmen / workmen carrying out essential repair work / maintenance within the restricted zone outside the hours of loading and unloading as specified in the order.
- **Disabled persons' access permit** – Disabled persons accessing facilities and / or services within the restricted zone.
- **Community transport access permits** – Local community transport providers and other such groups who provide essential door-to-door transport services to persons having severe mobility impairment, or who live in areas with limited public transport services.
- **Miscellaneous access permits** – Individuals, in exceptional circumstances where the Issuing Officer feels that access is required but is not covered by any of the above.

Not all restricted zones will operate all categories, and specific criteria may vary from one zone to another depending on local conditions.

DETAILS OF ISSUING OFFICES

You can request an application form for an access permit by contacting your local issuing office at locations detailed in Table 1.

Table 1

Restricted zone/ Town	Roads Service Division	Issuing office details
Lisburn	Eastern	Lisburn Section Office 40a Benson Street Lisburn BT28 2BG Tel: 9262 6677
Belfast Carrickfergus	Eastern	Belfast North Section Office/ Carrickfergus Section Office 148-158 Corporation Street Belfast BT1 3DH Tel: 9025 4098
Coleraine Ballymena Antrim Limavady	Northern	Roads Service County Hall Castlerock Road Coleraine BT51 3HS Tel: 7034 1300
Londonderry	Northern	Londonderry Section Office 1 Crescent Road Londonderry BT47 2NQ Tel: 7132 1600
Enniskillen Omagh	Western	Roads Service County Hall Drumragh Avenue Omagh BT79 7AF Tel: 8225 4111
Armagh	Southern	Roads Service Traffic Section Marlborough House Central Way Craigavon BT64 1AD Tel: 3834 1144
Newtownards	Southern	Roads Service Rathkeltair House Market Street Downpatrick BT30 6AJ Tel: 4461 2211

5.2 Appendix 2 Guidance for applicants and frequently asked questions (FAQs)

In addition to Appendix 1 General guidance notes, the following guidance notes should be included with all application forms.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND CATEGORY SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

Restrictions on access times, number of permits allowed, supporting documents and various other requirements differ between categories. To ensure that you follow the correct procedure for the type of permit, please check the relevant permit category below:

Residents' access

Long-term permits may be issued for residents' access.

Dwellings having vehicular access from streets or roads outside the restricted zone shall not be eligible for a residents' access permit.

Supporting Documents:

- Proof of ownership or usage of vehicle (see proof of ownership section); and
- Proof of residency (see proof of residency section).

Church access

Long-term permits may be issued for church access.

Applications may be considered from individuals (e.g. ministers, elders, etc.) involved in church work, which requires them to use a vehicle on a daily or weekly basis for the conveyance of goods and / or equipment to and from the church / church hall.

The church premises must be accessed solely from a road / street within the restricted zone.

A maximum of three access permits may be issued to a church, with the option of including two additional vehicle registrations on each permit.

Supporting documents:

- Proof of ownership or usage of vehicle (see proof of ownership section); and
- Proof of need for the permit in the form of a typed letter on headed paper from the church confirming that vehicle access is required.

Off-street car parking access

Long-term permits may be issued for access to private off-street parking facilities.

The parking facility must be accessed solely from a road / street within the restricted zone.

Applications for access for off-street parking for residential properties shall be considered under residents' access.

Supporting documents:

- Proof of ownership or usage of vehicle (see proof of ownership section); and
- Proof of usage of car park in the form of:
 - a) a typed letter on headed paper, signed by the car park owner or representative confirming that the applicant is entitled to use the car park and requires access to it on a daily basis; or
 - b) a copy of a contract or agreement between the applicant or applicant's employer and the owner of the car park, signed by the car park owner or representative confirming that the applicant uses the car park on a regular basis.

Banking access

Long and short-term permits may be issued for access into a restricted zone to visit banks.

Applications shall only be accepted: -

- where the bank is within the restricted zone (e.g. postcode, street name, etc), and
- from individuals who bank over £5,000, and / or a high percentage of coins, per visit.

Long-term permits may be issued where an individual or business requires access to the bank at least once a month.

Short-term permits may be issued for one-off occasions e.g. depositing funds or proceeds from fundraisers, charity events, etc.

A maximum waiting time of 15 minutes shall be imposed on vehicles displaying a banking access permit in the restricted zone.

Where two or more vehicles alternate on a regular basis to visit the bank (for security reasons), then the registrations of all vehicles, up to a maximum of 3, may be submitted with the application form for inclusion on the permit.

Supporting documents:

- Proof of ownership or usage of vehicle (see proof of ownership section); and
- Proof of banking over £5,000 and / or a high percentage of coins per visit. A letter from the bank confirming this and the frequency of lodgements shall be required. Long-term permits shall only be issued where access to the bank is required at least once a month.

Business access

Long-term permits may be issued to wedding car companies or undertakers / funeral homes.

A maximum of three access permits may be issued to a wedding car company or undertaker / funeral home, with the option of including two additional vehicle registrations on each permit. A valid reason must be submitted with the application form for requesting additional registrations on a permit.

Supporting documents:

- Proof of ownership or usage of vehicle (see proof of ownership section); and
- Proof that access is required. A letter from the company should confirm that access is required to:
 - a) their own premises, where these premises are accessed through the restricted zone (proof of address required);
 - b) a residence whose only vehicular access is through the zone; or
 - c) a church, where the desired vehicular access is through the zone.

The term residence includes buildings such as residential / care homes for the elderly and hospitals / hospices.

Essential maintenance / repairs to buildings access

Short-term permits may be issued for essential maintenance (usually one-off items) and essential repair work on buildings.

Permits may only be issued where: -

1. the location of the work is within the restricted zone; and / or
2. the only access is from a road / street within the restricted zone.

Only essential vehicles shall be granted access.

A maximum of three access permits may be issued to each firm, with the option of including two additional vehicle registrations on each permit.

Supporting documents:

- Proof of ownership or usage of vehicle (see proof of ownership section);
- Verification of access hours requested and destination in the form of a typed letter on headed paper signed by the employer; and
- Proof of need to carry out work:
 - a) a copy of a contract or agreement between the applicant and the employer, signed and dated by the employer; or
 - b) where no formal contract exists, a typed letter on headed paper signed and dated by the employer confirming that the applicant is employed to carry out essential maintenance or repairs on the named premises.

Disabled persons' access

This category does not apply to restricted zones within Belfast City Centre. An exemption applies within Belfast which allows a motor vehicle lawfully displaying a disabled persons badge unrestricted access to Donegall Place, Castle Place and parts of Castle Street and High Street without an authorisation permit. On all other streets within the Belfast City Centre restricted zone, vehicular access is prohibited for disabled persons.

Disabled persons may be eligible for long-term permits to access services and / or facilities.

Disabled persons' access permits shall allow access as follows:

- General access will be allowed into all zones up until 11.00am Monday to Saturday.
- An additional 4 hours per week, during afternoons, outside specific loading/unloading times and granted in 2 hour slots, would be available by application, to facilitate those blue badge holders who found the general morning access time up to 11.00am to be unsuitable.
- Exceptionally where these increased access times did not suit and cases of extreme hardship were established, every effort should be made to treat applications for access outside these times sympathetically. Applications should be made to the local Roads Service Divisional Manager or other officer nominated by him.
- Applications for access to zones on Sundays, should not normally present significant problems. However access during busy shopping periods, for example in the run up to Christmas, would require more detailed consideration.

An applicant shall specify the reason for access (e.g. shopping, dentist, doctor) along with approx. location. The applicant shall also specify their required times of access on the application form.

Applicants who put forward a strong case for access to more than one restricted zone may be considered for a second permit. However, a separate application should be made to the relevant Issuing Office.

Where the permit holder's preferred method of transport is taxi, the permit may be temporarily transferred to the taxi subject to the following limitations: -

1. the driver of the taxi must hold a valid taxi driver and PSV licence;
2. the permit shall only be valid when in use for the carriage of the disabled person; and
3. the hours of validity as stated on the permit will apply to the taxi.

Disabled persons **must** display their Blue Badge and access permit together when accessing the restricted zone, whether in a private vehicle or licensed taxi.

Supporting documents:

- Proof of disability in the form of a copy of a Blue Badge issued by the Department for Regional Development or production of the Badge in person at the local issuing office.

Community transport access

Long and short-term permits may be available to local community transport providers and other such groups who provide essential door-to-door transport services to persons having severe mobility impairment or who live in areas with limited public transport services.

Use of the permit shall be restricted to conveyance of goods hours as detailed in the relevant order (e.g. 17:00-11:00 or 18:00-11:00).

A maximum of three permits may be issued to each organisation.

Supporting documents:

- Proof of ownership or usage of vehicle (see proof of ownership section);
- Proof of the organisation's address shall be required in the form of a typed letter on headed paper, signed by a representative of the organisation confirming the address; and
- Proof of vehicle registration with Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland under the small bus permit scheme.

Miscellaneous access

Miscellaneous permits shall be issued for short-term use only.

Supporting documents:

- Proof of ownership or usage of vehicle (see proof of ownership section); and
- Depending on the purpose of the permit, the Issuing Officer may ask for other supporting documents.

HOW TO USE YOUR PERMIT – FAQs

HOW LONG IS MY PERMIT VALID FOR?

If you have been issued with a short-term permit, this will be valid for a maximum of 2 weeks. If you have been issued with a long-term permit this will be valid for a maximum of 12 months. The expiry date will be printed on the front of the permit.

CAN I USE MY PERMIT ON ANOTHER VEHICLE?

No. Permits are issued to specified vehicles only and, with the exception of disabled persons' access permits, shall not be transferable to vehicles not detailed on the permit.

CAN I USE MY PERMIT IN ANOTHER RESTRICTED ZONE?

No. Permits are issued for access to specified restricted zones and shall not be transferable from one zone to another.

DOES MY PERMIT ENTITLE ME TO PARK WITHIN THE ZONE?

No. Possession of a valid permit is not an entitlement to park within a restricted zone.

HOW SHOULD I DISPLAY MY PERMIT?

Permits shall be displayed on the inside surface of the windscreen or a side window facing the kerb, or place the permit on the dashboard area immediately below the windscreen so that the particulars recorded on the front of the permit are clearly visible to a person standing at the front or side of the vehicle.

WITHIN A PEDESTRIAN ZONE, REMEMBER;

- the pedestrian always has priority in the restricted zone;
- vehicles driven in the pedestrian zone must be driven slowly and with due care and consideration of the pedestrian;
- never leave a vehicle where it would cause an obstruction or danger to pedestrians or other vulnerable users; and
- always obey local traffic signs at the entrance / exit to a restricted zone, and traffic signs and parking / waiting restrictions within the zone.

DO I NEED TO RENEW MY PERMIT?

Yes. You will need to apply for a renewal permit if:

- your permit expires; or
- your details change, e.g. name, address or vehicle details.

WILL ROADS SERVICE SEND ME OUT A NEW PERMIT ONCE MY CURRENT ONE RUNS OUT?

No. It is the sole responsibility of the permit holder to apply for a renewal permit.

WILL I RECEIVE A RENEWAL NOTICE?

No. Renewal notices will not be sent out to existing permit holders.

MY PERMIT HAS BEEN LOST OR STOLEN, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

You must inform the relevant Issuing Office immediately, where the Issuing Officer will advise you on how to apply for a replacement permit. If a permit has been mislaid and is subsequently found after the issue of a replacement, the original permit must be returned to the issuing office as soon as possible.

ARE THERE CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE MY PERMIT MAY BE REVOKED?

Yes. Permits may be revoked where:

- the applicant's circumstances no longer confer eligibility for a permit; or
- the permit is fraudulently used; or
- a replacement permit has been issued in its place.

WHAT FORMS OF PROOF OF RESIDENCY ARE ACCEPTABLE?

Where the issuing office requires proof of residency, the following may be accepted:

- Northern Ireland or Great Britain full driving licence or a Northern Ireland provisional licence, each bearing the photograph of the holder; or
- passport; or
- Senior Citizen's SmartPass issued under the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme; or
- electoral identity card.

If none of the above indicates residency matching that of the application, then further additional proof shall be required in the form of a: -

- current rent book; or
- utility or rates bill issued within the last six months.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PRODUCE FOR PROOF OF VEHICLE OWNERSHIP OR USAGE?

Where the issuing office requires proof of ownership or usage of a vehicle, the applicant shall produce a current driver's licence together with one of the following: -

- the Registration Document;
- a copy of the vehicle insurance documentation;

- a copy of a hiring / leasing agreement, together with a letter from the employer where appropriate; or
- for company owned vehicles, a typed letter on headed paper & signed by the Company Secretary confirming that the vehicle is made available to the applicant for daily use.

CAN I APPEAL IF I AM REFUSED A PERMIT?

Yes. Appeals must be made to the Issuing Office within 2 weeks of an applicant receiving a refusal letter. Only written appeals shall be accepted.

5.3 Appendix 3 Sample application form

Important information for applicants:

- Read all guidance notes carefully **before** completing the application form
- Complete the form in black ink and BLOCK CAPITALS

Section A - Applicant Details	Official Use Only
Full Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> <i>(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)</i>	Date received: ___ / ___ / ___
Company Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> <i>(If applying on behalf of a company)</i>	Initials: _____
Address: <input style="width: 95%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	Application Completed <input type="checkbox"/>
Postcode: <input style="width: 60%;" type="text"/>	Supporting Documents <input type="checkbox"/>
Contact Tel No.: <input style="width: 40%;" type="text"/> <i>(Home/ Business)</i> <input style="width: 40%;" type="text"/> <i>(Mob)</i>	Permit Issued: YES / NO
	Documents returned <input type="checkbox"/>
	Roads Service Ref: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>

Section B - Permit Details

Permit Category: *(see guidance notes for categories)*

Permit Type: *(delete as appropriate)*

Date required: / to /

Days and times required:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
From:							
To:							

Section C - Restricted Zone Details

Town / City applied for:

Road / Street name(s):

Details of why permit is required including locations: (e.g. address, off-street car park name)

Section D - Vehicle Details

1st Vehicle

2nd Vehicle

3rd Vehicle

Registered Keeper:

--	--	--

Make and Model:

--	--	--

Registration Mark:

--	--	--

Reason for requesting more than one registration on the permit:

Section E - Declaration

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information supplied in this application form and supporting documents is correct.

Applicant's signature:

Date:

If you are signing on behalf of a third party such as an employer or other organisation, please state the position you hold:

5.4 Appendix 4 Sample letters to applicants

Letter accompanying application form

Dear XXXXX

ACCESS PERMIT – BELFAST CITY CENTRE RESTRICTED ZONE

Thank you for *letter/ request/ phone call* of 9 November 2005 regarding vehicle access to Belfast City Centre restricted zone.

Roads Service issue and manage vehicle access permits for restricted zones introduced under the Road Traffic Regulation (NI) Order and Planning (NI) Order. In order to facilitate pedestrian movement whilst maintaining a safe environment for all users of the restricted zone, it has been necessary for Roads Service to introduce strict criteria to control vehicle access into the zone during the hours of 11:00am to 6:00pm. All applications for vehicle access permits are subject to these criteria as detailed in Roads Service Policy. The sole purpose of an access permits is to allow access to and from a particular location within a restricted zone and not for unlimited free parking.

Please find enclosed, 1 no. application form and a copy of Roads Service Restricted Zone Access Permit guidance notes.

Should you require any further information, please contact this office.

Yours sincerely

Issuing Officer

Request for more information - specific

Dear XXXXXX

ACCESS PERMIT – BELFAST CITY CENTRE RESTRICTED ZONE

Ref: Application dated 23 November 2005 for a vehicle access permit for Belfast City Centre restricted zone.

Your application for emergency short duration vehicle access is being considered under the Essential Maintenance/ Repairs to Building permit category. Please forward the following in order that your application can be processed:

- Dates and times that access is required.
- Written confirmation from a minimum of 3 of your clients verifying the purpose of your business, and stating why work cannot be carried out outside the hours of 11.00am to 6.00pm.

Should you require any further information, please contact this office.

Yours sincerely

Issuing Officer

Request for more information – general

Dear XXXXX

ACCESS PERMIT – BELFAST CITY CENTRE RESTRICTED ZONE

Ref: Application dated 11 November 2005 for a vehicle access permit for Belfast City Centre restricted zone.

Unfortunately your application does not give sufficient detail as to why you require access during the hours stated on your form. If you still believe access is required, please forward the following in order that your application can be processed:

- Purpose of your business.
- Dates and times that access is required.
- Written confirmation from a minimum of 3 of your clients verifying the purpose of your business, and stating why work cannot be carried out outside the hours of 11.00am to 6.00pm.

Your application shall be considered once Roads Service has received the above information.

Should you require any further information, please contact this office.

Yours sincerely

Issuing Officer

Rejection letter

Dear XXXXX

ACCESS PERMITS – BELFAST CITY CENTRE RESTRICTED ZONE

Ref: Application dated 31 October 2005 for a vehicle access permit for Belfast City Centre restricted zone.

Your application has been assessed in accordance with the criteria detailed in Roads Service Policy. Based on the information you have supplied in your application form and supporting documents, I regret to inform you that I am unable to authorise a vehicle access permit for the reason you have requested.

Yours sincerely

Issuing Officer

Rejection letter – delivering goods

Dear XXXXX

ACCESS PERMIT – BELFAST CITY CENTRE RESTRICTED ZONE

Ref: Application dated 22 December 2005 for a vehicle access permit for Belfast City Centre restricted zone.

Your application has been assessed in accordance with criteria as detailed in Roads Service Policy. Based on the information you have supplied in your application form and supporting documents, I regret to inform you that I am unable to authorise a vehicle access permit for the reason you have requested.

Deliveries during the hours 11.00am to 6.00pm do not meet the criteria as set out in Roads Service Policy.

You may not be aware that, by law, vehicles conveying goods to or from premises in the restricted area, being goods that by reason of their size or weight, could not reasonably be conveyed to or from such premises otherwise than by means of a vehicle, may enter that area without a permit between 6.00pm and 11.00am.

Yours sincerely

Issuing Officer

5.5 Appendix 5 Orders implementing restricted zones

The following tables list Primary Orders for all legislation governing restricted zones throughout Northern Ireland, current at the date of issue of this policy. Should you require further information, or a copy of any of the orders listed, please contact the Lands and Legislation Branch, Roads Service Headquarters, Clarence Court, Belfast.

Belfast

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Ann Street (Part)	Planning Order 1972	1/04/77
Arthur Place	Planning Order 1972	31/03/77
Arthur Square	Planning Order 1972	31/03/77
Arthur Street	Planning Order 1972	31/03/77
Bank Street	Planning Order 1972	1/07/88
Berry Street (Part)	Planning Order 1972	10/12/90
Castle Street (Part)	Planning Order 1991	28/05/01
Chapel Lane	Planning Order 1972	31/03/77
Church Lane	Planning Order 1972	31/03/77
Church Street	Planning Order 1972	27/12/90
College Street (Part)	Planning Order 1972	31/03/77
Cornmarket	Planning Order 1972	5/02/76
Fountain Lane	Planning Order 1972	31/03/77
Fountain Street	Planning Order 1972	31/03/77
Lombard Street	Planning Order 1972	28/03/77
Lower Garfield Street	Planning Order 1972	27/06/89
Marquis Street	Planning Order 1972	19/05/88
Rosemary Street	Road Traffic (NI) Order 1981	29/04/90
Royal Avenue (Part)	Road Traffic (NI) Order 1981	29/04/90
William Street	Planning Order 1972	27/12/90
William Street South	Planning Order 1972	31/03/77
Donegall Place	Planning Order 1991	28/05/01
High Street (Part)	Planning Order 1991	28/05/01
Castle Place	Planning Order 1991	28/05/01
Castle Lane	Planning Order 1972	5/02/76

Carrickfergus

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
North Street	Road Traffic Order 1982	1/11/93
West Street	Planning Order 1972	22/06/78
Market Place	Planning Order 1972	22/06/78

Lisburn

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Bow Street (Part)	Planning Order 1972	21/01/1982
Market Square (Part)	Planning Order 1972	21/01/1982
Graham Gardens (Part)	Planning Order 1972	21/01/1982
Haslem's Lane (Part)	Planning Order 1972	21/01/1982

Londonderry

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Shipquay Place	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Guildhall Street	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Custom House Street	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Magazine Gate	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Magazine Street	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Waterloo Place	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
William Street (Part)	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Strand Road	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Police Court Street	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Waterloo Street (Part)	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Union Hall Place	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Castle Gate	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Castle Street	Planning Order 1972	26/02/1989
Waterloo Street (Part)	Planning (NI) Order 1991	1/02/1993

Coleraine

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Kingsgate Street (Part)	Planning Order 1972	21/06/1979
Railway Road (Part)	Planning Order 1972	21/06/1979
Society Street (Part)	Planning Order 1972	21/06/1979
Church Street	Planning Order 1972	8/05/1978
The Diamond	Planning Order 1972	8/05/1978
Bridge Street	Planning Order 1972	8/05/1978
Bellhouse Lane (Part)	Planning Order 1972	8/05/1978
Park Street (Part)	Planning Order 1972	8/05/1978
Stone Row (Part)	Planning Order 1972	8/05/1978
New Row (Part)	Planning Order 1972	8/05/1978
Queen Street	Planning Order 1972	8/05/1978
Abbey Street (Part)	Planning Order 1972	8/05/1978

Limavady

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Market Street	Planning (NI) Order 1991	18/05/1992

Ballymena

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Greenvale Street	Planning (NI) Order 1991	11/07/1995

Antrim

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Market Square	Planning (NI) Order 1991	1/01/1996
High Street (Part)	Planning (NI) Order 1991	1/01/1996

Newtownards

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Conway Square	Planning (NI) Order 1972	16/05/1989

Armagh

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Scotch Street (Part)	Planning (NI) Order 1991	3/06/2009
Market Street (Part)	Planning (NI) Order 1991	3/06/2009
Upper English Street (Part)	Planning (NI) Order 1991	3/06/2009
Jenny's Row	Planning (NI) Order 1991	3/06/2009
McCrum's Court	Planning (NI) Order 1991	3/06/2009

Omagh

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Old Market Place	Planning (NI) Order 1972	30/01/1989

Enniskillen

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Market Street (Part)	Planning (NI) Order 1991	1996
Middleton Street	Planning (NI) Order 1991	1996
Nugent's Entry (Part)	Planning (NI) Order 1991	1996

Banbridge

Location	Primary Order	Date of Legislation
Railway Street (Part)	Planning (NI) Order 1991	2004

6 Control Sheet - Roads Service Policy & Procedure Guide : E039
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Title: Restricted Zone Access Permits – Issue and Management

Document History

Version	Date	Author	Authorised by Document Control Panel Members	
			Name	Signature
1 (Final)	19 June 2006	J Irvine	D Mackle	:
			N Chambers	:
			C Brown	:
2	June 2011	K Stevenson	H Hamilton	

Overall Reasons For This Version

Version	Reasons
1	First issue of this RSPPG
2	Following publication, in June 2011, of the EQIA into the 'Issue and Management of Access Permits to Restricted Zones for Blue Badge holders' version 2 updates this RSPPG in line with the increased access times now available.

Revision Details

Version	Amendments
2	2.2.1.6 DEM 57/03 replaced with RSPPG_E037.
2	2.11.1.2 Additional 4 hours access per week for blue badge holders added.