

SAFETY TOPICS

CONFINED SPACES

The Ins-and-Out of Confined Space

Confined spaces present a variety of hazards that, when not properly handled, can lead to a serious injury or death. Examples include: storage tanks, compartments in ships, boilers, pits, silos, vats, degreasers, process vessels, reaction vessels, exhaust and ventilation ducts, sewers, tunnels, pipelines, and utility vaults.

A "Confined Space" refers to a location that:

- Is large enough to enter and work inside
- Limited means of entry and exit
- Not designed for worker occupancy

There are three basic types of confined spaces:

- Non-Permit Required
- Permit Required
- Alternate Entry

While entries can be done into most spaces, keep in mind that every entry must follow OSHA regulations.

Permit-Required confined spaces are more hazardous and have specific procedures you need to follow for entry. These spaces have the three characteristics listed above plus at least one of the following:

- The space has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere: think fuel storage or chemical storage.
- It contains materials that may engulf the entrant – grain silos and sewage wet wells are good examples.
- Inadequate ventilation that could produce or contain harmful air contaminants.
- The space is internally configured such that the entrant could become trapped by inwardly converging walls; or a floor that slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross section. Tapered bottom containers such as bottom dump rail cars or trucks fall into this category.
- Contains any other health and/or safety hazard.

Alternate Entry spaces are actually permit required spaces where the only hazard is atmospheric and the employer can show that it can be controlled with ventilation.

Non-Permit Required spaces meet only the three conditions listed at the top and none of the permit-required conditions. Non-Permit Required don't require as much preparation and are considered less dangerous

...but don't let that fool you. All confined spaces are dangerous!

Key Safety Tips for Confined Spaces

- Determine that any required confined space entry permits have been fully completed.
- When entering permit required spaces, review the permit, and ensure it's safe to enter.
- Know who is going in and who's staying out.
- Have a good rescue plan; train for it; and review the plan just prior to making any entry.
- Inspect and use your PPE!



INTERESTING FACTS

- The marine & agricultural industries have the most confined space injuries followed by construction, municipalities, & manufacturing
- There are far more confined space deaths by would-be rescuers than original victims!
- Confined space deaths happen often -- there are nearly 100 fatalities each year!

SAFETY MEETING ATTENDANCE

CONFINED SPACES

Company: _____ Date: _____

Trained By: _____ Location: _____

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION TOPICS:

ATTENDEES:

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