

Background

What is a confined space?

Confined space work is a very hazardous component of the construction industry. By definition a confined space is a space that is:

- Large enough and arranged so that an employee can fully enter work
- Has limited or restricted means for entry or exit
- May contain hazards such as sloped walls, obstructions, the potential for engulfment, poor or no lighting or ventilation
- Not designed for continuous employee occupancy

Due to the limited means of entry and exit, there are no such things as small problems in confined space.

Primary Hazards:

- Oxygen Deficiencies
- Exposure to hazardous substances



Safety Protocol

Common concerns of confined space:

Due to limited means of entry, exit and visibility to the outside world, many precautions need to be taken before and after entry.

Steps before entry:

- Obtain all permits and clearances from house
- Walk down protection with house representatives
- Set up an acceptable entry point
- Test atmosphere prior to and at all times while employees are in the space
- Mitigate hazards found (i.e. Lighting, ventilation, fall protection and retrieval systems)
- Assign a hole watch (attendant)
- Fill out post permit and attendant forms

Duties of Attendant

- To be present at all times while there are employees in the confined space
- Be aware of the hazards faced by the entrants and the signs and symptoms that may indicate exposure to a hazard
- Continuously monitor the atmosphere prior to and during Confined Space Work
- Maintain an accurate count of entrants in the permit space
- Remain outside the permit space during entry operations until properly relieved or replaced
- Monitor conditions both inside and outside of the space to determine if it is safe for entrants to remain in the space
- Communicate with entrants on a regular basis to insure well being
- To order an evacuation of the space if conditions inside or outside the space become unsafe
- Summon rescue or emergency personnel if he/she determines the entrant needs assistance
- To NOT engage in any activity that will distract them from performing their duties as an attendant

Duties of Entrants

- Know the hazards that you may face during entry
- To properly use the equipment for safe entry
- Regularly communicate with the attendant
- Alert the attendant of any potentially dangerous situation
- Exit the space immediately when ordered to do so by the attendant