



Toolbox Talk

Confined Space Entry: A Sensible Approach

Have you ever said, “What? You want me to go in there?” Before you enter or send anyone into a confined space, you need to recognize and evaluate the situation, identify the hazards and control them. Remember, a confined space is defined as a space that:

- Is large enough that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned work
- Has limited or restricted means for entry or exit
- Is not designed for continuous employee occupancy

If the confined space has “hazards” or the potential to contain “hazards” then it could be considered a *Permit Required* Confined Space. The following are some of the basic steps to protect anyone when working in confined spaces.

Evaluate the Task

Review the scope of operation or task and prepare a hazard analysis. Are there other contractors or companies who will also be working in the confined space with you? Will the other contractors or companies contribute to operational difficulties or create more hazards? You may need to evaluate any contributing hazards or operational difficulties that other contractors or companies may bring by speaking to the company representatives.

Identify All Exposures

Identifying the exposures may require the use of specialized equipment or the use of other resources. Atmospheric monitoring and testing equipment may need to be used to identify air contaminants, the oxygen level or other hazardous conditions. Experienced personnel on staff may need to be called on or external expertise could be used. By identifying the exposures, procedures can be taken to control the hazards or potential hazards that may be present in the confined space.

Control the Exposures

Once the hazards or potential hazards are identified, controls can be implemented to minimize or eliminate the exposures. Controls may include ventilation or purging of the area, lockout/tagout procedures, personal alarms, specialized lighting and use of personal protective equipment, such as respirators, harnesses or protective clothing. Communication devices may also be required.

Prepare for Emergencies

Planning for the unexpected is important. Emergency procedures, such as rescue, retrieval and emergency contact names and numbers must be clearly communicated, practiced and prepared prior to entry. Each person involved with confined space work must clearly understand their designated responsibilities and adhere to those responsibilities.



Equipment for emergencies may include access ladders, tripods, rescue harness, wristlets, self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBA), escape masks and other devices.

The OSHA standard and your local state requirements for confined space operations are extensive and must be followed. Decision flow charts are provided in the federal OSHA standard to assist you with making the right choices to protect you and your employees. By taking a sensible approach prior to entering confined spaces, you will be able to safely complete your work and not become a statistic.



Topic:

Date:

Presented by:

Organization/Department Name

Attendee Printed Name

Signature

Comments: