

Confined Spaces

Confined spaces include underground vaults, tanks, storage bins, manholes, pits, silos and pipelines. Though they may be large enough to enter and to work, confined spaces do not allow for continuous worker occupancy and have limited openings for entry or exit.

Permit-required Confined Spaces

- May contain a hazardous or potentially hazardous atmosphere
- Material in space may surround a worker suddenly
- Walls may converge inward or floors slope downward, tapering into a small area that could trap or asphyxiate a worker
- May have serious physical energy hazards such as unguarded machines or exposed live wires
- Employers must identify exposed workers of the existence and the locations of permit-required confined spaces and their hazards.

When Working in a Confined Space

- Don't enter a permit-required confined space without training or a permit.
- Follow employer's procedures when working in these types of confined spaces; know how and when to enter/exit.
- Identify any physical hazards before entering.
- Prior to and during entry, test and monitor for oxygen content, flammability, toxicity or explosive hazards.
- Use employer's fall protection, rescue, air monitoring, ventilation, lighting and communication equipment according to entry procedures.
- Maintain visual and/or electronic contact with a trained attendant in case of emergency rescue.

NOTE: Testing a confined space from top to bottom should be done with properly calibrated instruments to determine the presence of gases. Presence of gas requires ventilation and re-testing before workers may enter the space. If ventilation isn't possible but entry is necessary (such as in an emergency rescue), workers should have appropriate respiratory protection.

Source: OSHA

Safety tips developed based on generally accepted safety standards believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is for general guidance only and should not be relied upon for legal compliance purposes.

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