

Working in Small/Confined Spaces

Toolbox Talk #4



What are Confined Spaces?

A confined space does not necessarily mean a small, enclosed space. It could also be rather large. By definition, a confined space is an area that is not designed for humans to be in. Although it isn't a perfect fit, there is enough room for employees to awkwardly perform necessary jobs in the tight space. Confined spaces in most cases, have limited entry and are designed for continuous occupancy. The following could all be classified as "confined spaces":

- Tanks
- Vessels
- Silos
- Storage Bins
- Hoppers
- Pipe Lines
- Vaults
- Pits
- Manholes
- Tunnels
- Equipment Housing
- Ductwork

Some Risks of Confined Spaces

Many risks are prevalent when working in such a tight area, like:

- Lack of adequate ventilation
- Potential for oxygen level fluctuation
- Explosive gases
- Toxic Atmospheres
- Excessive Heat

How to Work Safely in a Confined Space

- Identify all possible risks in the confined space
- After risks are identified a permit may be required to work in a confined space with additional risks such as
 - Hazardous atmosphere
 - Material that could engulf an employee
 - Exposure to wires, or hazardous chemicals
- Have another employee outside the confined space to supervise before you get to work
- Use fall protection, ventilation, lighting and communication equipment according to entry procedures



Tips

- Always monitor the atmosphere
- Always be prepared for rescue