

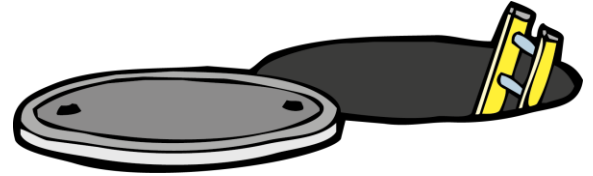
Confined Space

Fact: Each year in Australia, people are killed in a wide range of confined spaces, from storage vessels, to complex industrial equipment. Many of these fatalities occur when attempting to rescue another person in a confined space. Additionally, people can be seriously injured from other hazards found within confined spaces.



General Safety Tips:

- Managers/supervisors should always conduct a risk assessment to identify and control any hazards associated with entering a confined space in the particular situation.
- All applicable workers should be trained in confined space entry.



What is a Confined Space?

A 'confined space' means an enclosed or partially enclosed space that:

- is not designed or intended primarily to be occupied by a person; and
- is, or is designed or intended to be, at normal atmospheric pressure whilst any person is in the space; and
- is or is likely to be a risk to health and safety from-
- an atmosphere that does not have a safe oxygen level; or
- contaminants, including airborne gases, vapours and dusts, that may cause injury from fire or explosion; or
- harmful concentrations of any airborne contaminants; or
- engulfment

Examples of confined space include:

- Storage tanks, tank cars, process vessels, pressure vessels, boilers, silos and other tank-like compartments;
- Pits and degreasers; pipes, sewers, sewer pump stations including wet and dry wells, shafts and ducts; and
- Shipboard spaces entered through small hatchways or access points, cargo tanks, cellular double bottom tanks, duct keels, ballast or oil tanks and void spaces.
- Storm water drains, sewers, pits, tunnels, and similar structures.

What are the health hazards in a confined space?

- **Oxygen Deficiency** – When the level of oxygen is low, life is threatened.
- **Toxic Gases** - These can cause poisoning or suffocation.

- **Explosion or Fire** – A buildup of flammable gasses or vapours can cause explosion.



All of these health hazards can result in death.

When is a confined Space a risk?

Danger is always present during routine tasks such as maintenance, inspections, repairs and cleaning.

Risk Assessment

Before entering or working in a confined space, a risk assessment must be conducted to identify potential hazards and risks.

Always conduct a risk assessment before any controls are implemented and a risk assessment after the controls are implemented to ensure the risk has been reduced.

Where generic type work is carried out in confined spaces (maintenance) a generic risk assessment may be used for several confined spaces, however these risk assessments must be on the job and discussed by staff before entry to a confined space.

Take into consideration:

- Oxygen levels
- Toxic gasses
- Explosive gases
- Falling objects
- Flooding
- Heat
- Isolation of electrical and mechanical services
- Emergency and rescue arrangements

How do I work in a confined space safely?

- **NEVER** enter a confined space unless you are trained, have been deemed competent, and are authorised to do so;
- Ask your Supervisor for an "Entry Permit", before entering a confined space;
- Conduct a Risk Assessment before entering the confined space;
- Test the atmosphere every time before you enter;
- Always monitor the atmosphere while working in the space;
- Always ensure adequate ventilation while working in the space;
- Make sure that the electrical services are isolated. Whoever enters the confined space must check to ensure that it is isolated;
- Always wear a safety harness and life line while working in the confined space;
- Make sure another suitable qualified person is present in close proximity to the entrance of the confined space acting as an observer and standby rescue person;
- Sign the Entry Permit;
- **NEVER** smoke in a confined space;
- If you are required to wear a breathing apparatus, **NEVER** remove it in the confined space;
- Always wear the Personal Protective Equipment provided;
- If an alarm is activated, get out immediately;
- Re-test the atmosphere before entering;
- On completion of work, always restore the confined space to normal; and
- Maintain all confined space equipment and record it in a logbook.

If an emergency happens, what do I do?

- Call for help immediately;
- Attempt to retrieve the person **WITHOUT** entering the confined space;
- **NEVER** enter the confined space to rescue a collapsed worker without training and breathing apparatus;
- Once the person has been retrieved, commence resuscitation if necessary;

- Get medical assistance if possible;
- Isolate the area; and
- Notify your Supervisor and USQSafe immediately.



If you are working in a confined space and you feel dizzy, light headed or the gas detector has gone into alarm, leave the space IMMEDIATELY!

Legislation:

Work Health and Safety Act 2011(Qld) – s19
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld)
Australian Standard AS 2865 – 2009 Confined spaces
Confined Spaces Code of Practice 2011