

What is a Confined Space

Introduction

A confined space is large enough for bodily entry and work, has limited or restricted entry or exit, and is not designed for continuous employee occupancy. Examples may include tanks, pits, silos, and sewers, depending on their actual configuration.

Hazards & Controls

Have the employer evaluate the space before work. Limited access, machinery, stored energy, engulfment, heat, and hazardous air can threaten entrants even when the space looks empty.

Under the permit-space rules, entry occurs when any part of a person's body crosses the opening plane. Do not lean into a space to test or inspect it without the required evaluation and authorization. Use barriers and signs to prevent unauthorized entry.

Use the employer's authorized entry procedure for the applicable industry. These awareness notes do not authorize entry or replace required role-specific training.

Safety Reminders

Do not enter until required controls, authorization, and emergency arrangements are verified. Exit and report alarms, symptoms, loss of communication, or other prohibited conditions; never attempt an unauthorized rescue.

Engagement Questions

Which three characteristics make this location a confined space?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Permit-Required Confined Spaces (1910.146)

OSHA: Confined Spaces in Construction - Definitions

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Meeting Record & Sign-In

What is a Confined Space

Company: _____ Date: _____

Jobsite: _____ Presenter: _____

Time / duration: _____ Crew / shift: _____

Site-specific hazards and controls discussed

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Follow-up action / responsible person / due date

Signatures record participation only. They do not establish competency, certify compliance, or waive rights. Retain completed sheets under company policy. Print additional copies for larger crews.

Permit-Required vs. Non-Permit Confined Spaces

Introduction

A confined space is permit-required when it contains or could contain a hazardous atmosphere, engulfment hazard, trapping or asphyxiating configuration, or another recognized serious safety or health hazard.

Hazards & Controls

Classification requires evaluation of all hazards, not just an air reading. Work such as welding, cleaning, or painting can introduce hazards into a previously non-permit space.

Only use reclassification or alternate-entry procedures when every condition of the applicable rule is met and documented. Ventilation controls an atmospheric hazard; it does not by itself eliminate it or automatically make a permit space non-permit. Stop and reassess when conditions change.

Use the employer's authorized entry procedure for the applicable industry. These awareness notes do not authorize entry or replace required role-specific training.

Safety Reminders

Do not enter until required controls, authorization, and emergency arrangements are verified. Exit and report alarms, symptoms, loss of communication, or other prohibited conditions; never attempt an unauthorized rescue.

Engagement Questions

What hazards make this space permit-required, and what changes would trigger reassessment?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Permit-Required Confined Spaces (1910.146)

OSHA: Construction Confined Spaces - General Requirements

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Permit-Required vs. Non-Permit Confined Spaces

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Jobsite: _____ Presenter: _____

Time / duration: _____ Crew / shift: _____

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Entry Permits and Authorization

Introduction

A permit documents the entry conditions and controls for a particular permit-required confined space job. It is not permission to ignore changing conditions or a substitute for the employer's entry program.

Hazards & Controls

Before authorized permit entry, the entry supervisor verifies the required precautions, testing, equipment, personnel, communications, and rescue arrangements, then signs the permit. Make it available to entrants at the entry point by posting or an equally effective method.

Check the space, work scope, hazards, acceptable conditions, isolation, authorized entrants, attendant, duration, and test results. End entry when the job is complete or conditions require it. Follow the applicable cancellation, suspension, reassessment, and reauthorization procedure before anyone re-enters.

Use the employer's authorized entry procedure for the applicable industry. These awareness notes do not authorize entry or replace required role-specific training.

Safety Reminders

Do not enter until required controls, authorization, and emergency arrangements are verified. Exit and report alarms, symptoms, loss of communication, or other prohibited conditions; never attempt an unauthorized rescue.

Engagement Questions

Who authorizes this entry, and what would invalidate its current authorization?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Permit-Required Confined Spaces (1910.146)

OSHA: Construction Confined Spaces - Permitting Process

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Meeting Record & Sign-In

Entry Permits and Authorization

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Jobsite: _____ Presenter: _____

Time / duration: _____ Crew / shift: _____

Site-specific hazards and controls discussed

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Atmospheric Testing and Monitoring

Introduction

Confined-space air can change without visible signs or a reliable odor. Instruments must match the anticipated contaminants and be used by trained personnel under the entry program.

Hazards & Controls

Use suitable, calibrated direct-reading instruments; perform function checks as instructed. Test oxygen, then combustible gases and vapors, then toxic gases and vapors. Account for sampling locations, stratification, hose delay, and sensor limitations. A four-gas monitor does not detect every possible contaminant.

Establish permit-specific acceptable conditions and monitoring requirements. Oxygen below 19.5% or above 23.5%, or flammables above 10% of the LFL, are hazardous under these definitions; values within those bounds do not alone prove safe entry. Exit for alarms, symptoms, or prohibited conditions. Follow required continuous monitoring or justified periodic monitoring rules.

Use the employer's authorized entry procedure for the applicable industry. These awareness notes do not authorize entry or replace required role-specific training.

Safety Reminders

Do not enter until required controls, authorization, and emergency arrangements are verified. Exit and report alarms, symptoms, loss of communication, or other prohibited conditions; never attempt an unauthorized rescue.

Engagement Questions

Which contaminants can our instrument detect, and which hazards need other methods?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Permit-Required Confined Spaces (1910.146)

OSHA: Construction Permit-Space Program - Testing and Monitoring

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Meeting Record & Sign-In

Atmospheric Testing and Monitoring

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Jobsite: _____ Presenter: _____

Time / duration: _____ Crew / shift: _____

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Ventilation and Purging

Introduction

Ventilation can help control atmospheric hazards when properly selected and verified. Purging and inerting are different processes; replacing air with nitrogen can create an immediately dangerous oxygen-deficient atmosphere.

Hazards & Controls

Follow the approved sequence for remote initial testing, any necessary purging or ventilation, and retesting before entry. Use clean supply air, suitable equipment, and duct placement that reaches occupied areas without recirculating exhaust or exposing other workers. Never use oxygen to ventilate a space.

Maintain ventilation and atmospheric monitoring as required throughout entry. A fan running is not proof of safe conditions. If ventilation fails or a prohibited condition develops, exit as directed and reassess. Never enter an inerted space as though it contains breathable air.

Use the employer's authorized entry procedure for the applicable industry. These awareness notes do not authorize entry or replace required role-specific training.

Safety Reminders

Do not enter until required controls, authorization, and emergency arrangements are verified. Exit and report alarms, symptoms, loss of communication, or other prohibited conditions; never attempt an unauthorized rescue.

Engagement Questions

Where does our supply air come from, and what happens if the ventilation stops?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Permit-Required Confined Spaces (1910.146)

OSHA: Construction Definitions - Inerting and Control

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Meeting Record & Sign-In

Ventilation and Purging

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Jobsite: _____ Presenter: _____

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Follow-up action / responsible person / due date

Lockout-Tagout (LOTO) for Confined Spaces

Introduction

Confined-space isolation addresses unexpected motion, energy, and material entering the space. Electrical lockout alone may leave pressure, gravity, chemicals, or connected piping uncontrolled.

Hazards & Controls

Use the approved, task-specific isolation procedure. Authorized personnel identify energy and material sources, isolate them, apply required locks or tags, control stored energy, and verify the isolation before entry. A stopped motor or closed control switch is not isolation.

Use effective pipe and process isolation, such as appropriate blanking, disconnection, or other permitted methods selected for the hazard. Manage group work, shift changes, and restoration through the written procedure. Never remove another person's lock except through the employer's specifically authorized exception procedure.

Use the employer's authorized entry procedure for the applicable industry. These awareness notes do not authorize entry or replace required role-specific training.

Safety Reminders

Do not enter until required controls, authorization, and emergency arrangements are verified. Exit and report alarms, symptoms, loss of communication, or other prohibited conditions; never attempt an unauthorized rescue.

Engagement Questions

Which energy or material sources could still reach this space after electrical lockout?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Permit-Required Confined Spaces (1910.146)

OSHA: Control of Hazardous Energy (1910.147)

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Meeting Record & Sign-In

Lockout-Tagout (LOTO) for Confined Spaces

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Follow-up action / responsible person / due date

PPE Requirements for Confined Space Entry

Introduction

PPE must fit the identified hazards and the worker, but it cannot replace required isolation, atmospheric controls, monitoring, or entry authorization. Plan how equipment will affect movement and emergency retrieval.

Hazards & Controls

Select compatible eye, head, hand, foot, chemical, hearing, and other protection from the assessment and permit. Inspect, fit, and use it as instructed; plan safe removal and decontamination. Follow hygiene procedures for shared equipment rather than assuming all PPE must never be shared.

Respirator selection requires the employer's respiratory protection program, including medical evaluation, training, and fit testing where applicable. Air-purifying respirators do not supply oxygen and are unsuitable for oxygen-deficient or IDLH entry. Specialized entry or rescue requires the correctly selected supplied-air or SCBA system and all other required controls.

Use the employer's authorized entry procedure for the applicable industry. These awareness notes do not authorize entry or replace required role-specific training.

Safety Reminders

Do not enter until required controls, authorization, and emergency arrangements are verified. Exit and report alarms, symptoms, loss of communication, or other prohibited conditions; never attempt an unauthorized rescue.

Engagement Questions

What can our selected PPE protect against, and what hazards does it not control?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Permit-Required Confined Spaces (1910.146)

OSHA: Respiratory Protection (1910.134)

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PPE Requirements for Confined Space Entry

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Follow-up action / responsible person / due date

Attendant Entrant and Supervisor Responsibilities

Introduction

A safe permit entry depends on trained people with assigned responsibilities. Role changes must be authorized and communicated; no task should distract the attendant from protecting entrants.

Hazards & Controls

Entrants understand hazards, use required equipment, maintain communication, alert the attendant to problems, and exit when ordered or when alarms, symptoms, or prohibited conditions occur. The attendant tracks entrants, monitors conditions, orders evacuation when required, and summons help.

The attendant stays outside until properly relieved and does no conflicting duties. Entry rescue is allowed only under the program by a properly trained, equipped rescuer with attendant coverage maintained. The supervisor verifies entry and rescue readiness, authorizes entry, and ends it when required.

Use the employer's authorized entry procedure for the applicable industry. These awareness notes do not authorize entry or replace required role-specific training.

Safety Reminders

Do not enter until required controls, authorization, and emergency arrangements are verified. Exit and report alarms, symptoms, loss of communication, or other prohibited conditions; never attempt an unauthorized rescue.

Engagement Questions

Who is assigned to each role, and how will a relief or emergency be handled?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Permit-Required Confined Spaces (1910.146)

OSHA: Construction Confined Spaces - Duties of Attendants

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Meeting Record & Sign-In

Attendant Entrant and Supervisor Responsibilities

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Follow-up action / responsible person / due date

Communication and Rescue Procedures

Introduction

Rescue must be planned for the actual space, hazards, and access. An impulsive entry can create additional victims. External emergency services must be evaluated and coordinated before relying on them.

Hazards & Controls

Test the communication method, evacuation signal, backup method, and emergency call procedure before entry. Verify a rescue service's availability, capability, response time, access, and awareness of the hazards. Prepare and practice the approved rescue arrangement.

Provide non-entry retrieval when required unless the applicable exception is justified because it increases risk or would not assist rescue. During an emergency, summon the designated service and perform only authorized procedures within your training. Never enter for rescue without the training, equipment, authorization, and attendant coverage required.

Use the employer's authorized entry procedure for the applicable industry. These awareness notes do not authorize entry or replace required role-specific training.

Safety Reminders

Do not enter until required controls, authorization, and emergency arrangements are verified. Exit and report alarms, symptoms, loss of communication, or other prohibited conditions; never attempt an unauthorized rescue.

Engagement Questions

Which rescue service is available now, and how will we summon and direct it?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Permit-Required Confined Spaces (1910.146)

OSHA: Construction Confined Spaces - Rescue and Emergency Services

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Follow-up action / responsible person / due date

Post-Entry Evaluation and Documentation

Introduction

Closing the job includes accounting for people, securing the space, managing isolation restoration, and recording what actually occurred. Lessons from completed entries should improve the employer's program.

Hazards & Controls

The entry supervisor ends the entry and handles the permit as required. Confirm everyone is out, record testing and monitoring results, identify unexpected conditions, and communicate unresolved issues before normal operations resume under the restoration procedure.

Retain canceled entry permits for at least one year under the cited OSHA permit-space rules, and longer where other requirements apply. Use them in the required program review and correct deficiencies. Record lessons, equipment problems, and needed training without treating a signed attendance sheet as proof of competency.

Use the employer's authorized entry procedure for the applicable industry. These awareness notes do not authorize entry or replace required role-specific training.

Safety Reminders

Do not enter until required controls, authorization, and emergency arrangements are verified. Exit and report alarms, symptoms, loss of communication, or other prohibited conditions; never attempt an unauthorized rescue.

Engagement Questions

What did this entry reveal that must change before the next one?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Permit-Required Confined Spaces (1910.146)

OSHA: Construction Confined Spaces - Permitting Process

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Post-Entry Evaluation and Documentation

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