

When a Confined Space Permit is Required

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Safety at work is a crucial issue for employers and employees, especially for those

working in specific environments. When working in confined spaces, various risks need to be taken into account so they can be managed for a safe working environment. Some confined spaces require permits before work can be conducted. Other confined spaces may not need a permit for work to be carried out. Knowing when a permit is required for confined spaces and how this relates to worker safety is vital.



Confined Space Permit

What Is a Confined Space, As Defined By OSHA?

Before understanding the difference between permit-required and non-permit required spaces, it's necessary to know how OSHA defines a confined space. The specific definition given by OSHA includes a set of conditions that a space must meet to be a confined space.

All three of these conditions from 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1910.146(b) must be met:

- The space is large enough and configured in a way that allows an employee to bodily enter and complete work
- There are limited means of entry or exit
- The space is not designed for continuous employee occupancy

Some examples of spaces that might meet this definition include manholes, silos, underground vaults, and pits. Spaces that meet these conditions can be permit-required or non-permit required spaces.

Permit-Required Confined Space

A permit-required confined space must meet all three of the conditions above, as well as at least

one more of the following conditions:

- A hazardous or potentially hazardous atmosphere
- Material that could engulf or asphyxiate the entrant
- Inwardly converging walls or a downward-sloping floor that tapers to a small cross-section
- Any other serious hazards to safety or health

Identifying a Permit-Required Confined Space

A space that meets any of the conditions outlined above for a permit-required confined space must be identified with clear signage to ensure accountability and permit oversight. Safety signs labeling the space as a permit-required confined space and warning people to keep out or use another effective means of communication can be used. If the space is not to be entered, the employer must take steps to keep people out.

Implementing a Written Permit Space Entry Program

When the permit-required confined space needs to be entered, a written permit space entry program must be in place. The program should contain safety procedures for workers to follow when working in and around the confined space. This includes drafting the permit (entry permit), which is written and printed to allow and control entry into the space.

An entry permit needs to contain certain information. It must include the spaces to be entered, when they will be entered, who will be entering, and more. OSHA defines which information needs to be included. They also provide examples of procedures and practices that might be detailed to control or eliminate hazards. OSHA also defines some circumstances when a full entry permit may not be required, and alternative procedures may be used instead. This includes, for example, if the only hazard is an atmosphere that can only be made safe using continuous forced air ventilation.

[Confined Space Rescue](#) Teams

Working in confined spaces is hazardous and is one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities. Working with a [confined space rescue team](#) helps employers cover all necessary permit requirements and ensures assistance is available during emergency situations. Even with the correct procedures in place and following all OSHA guidelines, things can go wrong. A confined space rescue may still be required. Employers can benefit from looking at the non-mandatory "Rescue Team or Rescue Service Evaluation Criteria" to help them determine the capabilities of rescue teams.

Knowing the difference between a permit-required confined space and a non-permit required confined space is a must for employers. First, understand what a confined space is, as defined by OSHA, before assessing whether a [confined space permit](#) is required. With the correct

understanding, the right procedures can be put in place. Hazards can then be managed whenever work needs to be carried out in the space. Although some confined spaces may not require a permit, it's still important to take precautions to manage potential hazards and keep workers safe.

Lance B

DCS Rescue

+1 562-595-3002

lanceb@anconservices.com

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