

Confined Space Entry Guideline

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The minimum requirements for the effective management of confined space risks are prescribed within AS 2865 Confined Spaces (adhered to in NZ also) and jurisdictional WHS Regulations.

A confined space is defined as an enclosed or partially enclosed space that:

- is not designed or intended to be occupied by a person
- is at normal atmospheric pressure—or is designed or intended to be at normal atmospheric pressure—while a person is in the space
- is a risk to health and safety from:
 - an atmosphere that doesn't have a safe oxygen level
 - contaminants like airborne gases, vapours and dusts that may cause injury from fire or explosion
- has harmful concentrations of any airborne contaminants
- is at risk of engulfment (to be immersed by material, which may result in asphyxiation).

A confined space is determined by the hazards associated with the specific situation. It is important not to confuse the size of a space as being significant to the definition as a confined space is not necessarily small.

Some examples of confined spaces include; tanks, vessels, vats, ducts, tunnels, wells, pipes, sewers, boilers and trenches.

All confined spaces should be identified prior to work. Where a confined space is identified, it is to be clearly marked by physical markings where practicable. The area where confined space work is being conducted, is to be secured against unauthorised entry.

All personnel involved in confined space entry work must be trained and competent. Workers must have a current certificate of competency from a Registered Training Organisation for working in a confined space. Training programs are available to cover confined space entry, rescue, atmospheric testing and breathing apparatus.

On site confined space risk must be managed through completion of:

- A job site risk assessment
- A confined space entry permit ([The Confined Space Permit available on the Contractor Essentials portal can be used unless customers/sites have their own specific document that must be used](#))
- A task specific SWMS ([The SWMS/JSEA template on the Contractor Essentials portal can be used](#))
- Other permits (hot works etc.) as applicable

Almost every confined space is unique and the hazards associated with them vary greatly. Entry into a confined space may pose the following potential hazards if not adequately assessed and controlled.

- Oxygen deficient or enriched atmospheres
- Flammable or explosive atmospheres
- The presence of contaminants on surfaces or in the atmosphere
- Uncontrolled introduction of gases or liquids
- Suffocation by solids or vapours
- Electrocution
- Excessive noise exposure
- Temperature extremes (Hot or Cold)
- Manual handling issues

- Slips, trips and fall

When assessing the risks associated with confined space entry, the following shall be considered as a minimum:

- Nature of the confined space
- Changes in atmospheric conditions
- Work to be performed
- Access and egress
- Emergency procedure requirements

The authorised person controlling the confined space entry works on site is responsible for;

- Reviewing the SWMS, any other risk assessments, and Confined Space Entry (CSE) Permit and briefing all relevant workers on the risks and how they are to be controlled;
- Recording each step of the CSE in the permit and ensuring all controls are in place before proceeding to the next step;
- Ensuring the CSE Permit is displayed prominently in the area where the work is to be performed
- Ensuring that the rescue plan and resources are adequate and prepared to respond to an emergency.

Once the entry process commences, the authorised person is responsible for enforcing controls and ensuring they remain effective. They must ensure that;

- The stand-by person/s remain in place, attentive to task and not diverted or distracted by other activities;
- The atmosphere is monitored continuously during the works if the risk assessment indicates that conditions may change due to the work being carried out or the disturbance of hazardous material in the confined space;
- The confined space remains isolated from all other energy sources or materials via an effective Lock-Out Tag-Out system;
- All personnel within the confined space can exit or be rescued effectively in the event of an alarm or emergency.

Following completion of the task the authorised person shall ensure:

- That all personnel signed onto the permit have personally signed themselves off the permit
- That a head count is conducted and all personnel are personally sighted and accounted for
- The area in and around the confined space is left in a safe manner
- All other related permits, lock-outs are removed and the space is returned to operation;
- The confined space entry has been concluded and all personnel are safe
- Relevant stakeholders are informed