

SAFETY MEETING TOPIC

This form shall be completed and kept on file

Job Name _____ Location _____ Job No. _____
Meeting Leader _____ Title _____
Date Held _____ Place _____ Time _____
Subject of Meeting WHAT IS CONFINED SPACE?

While cleaning the inside of a heat exchanger, five men were overcome with hydrogen sulfide fumes. A small amount of sulfur in the water had formed iron sulfide on the walls of the cooling jacket. When the men began cleaning the unit with acid, hydrogen sulfide was formed. The heat exchanger was a confined space.

In an effort to reduce confined space injuries and deaths, OSHA has prepared a standard for confined space entry. The actions required by the standard will help to reduce the 63 fatalities and over 5,000 injuries that occur each year in confined spaces. Your employer will be evaluating work areas to identify confined spaces and hazards that could restrict entry. Some spaces require workers to request a permit for entry.

Confined spaces can be found in any work place. There are three conditions used to identify a confined space.

1. The space is large enough and shaped so that a worker can bodily enter and perform assigned task.
2. The space has a limited or restricted means of entry or exit. (For example, tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, and pits are spaces that may have limited means of entry.
3. The space is not designed for workers to stay in that area.

Some confined spaces can be extremely hazardous. These spaces are called permit-required confined spaces. Permit-required confined spaces ("permit space") are confined spaces that have one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Contains or has a potential to contain a hazardous air or atmosphere;
2. Contains a material that has the potential for engulfing an entrant;
3. The shape could allow an entrant to be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or by a floor which slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross-section; or
4. Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazard.

All confined spaces must be evaluated to determine if hazards exist. If no hazards exist the confined space is not covered by the regulation. If a hazard exists that can be removed before any entry occurs, the space can be reclassified. Once the hazard is removed the space becomes a non-permit space. The hazard must be completely eliminated. For

example, removal of hazardous air by forced ventilation is not enough to reclassify a permit-required confined space.

Your employer will document how the reclassification was determined. The test results and the signature of the individual making the determination are available to you (employees).

Caution should be used in any confined space. Conditions may come up that require the space to be reevaluated. Always check with your supervisor before entering a confined space. Be alert to any changes that occur while in that space.