



Toolbox Talks

Confined Space Hazards



OSHA requires confined spaces to be **evaluated to find out if there are any hazards** present, and if there are hazards, then the area must be **classified as a permit-required confined space**.

OSHA Standard 1926.1202 "Confined space" means a space that: (1) Is large enough and so configured that an employee can bodily enter it; and (2) Has limited or restricted means for entry or exit; and (3) Is not designed for continuous employee occupancy.

There are **four categories of hazards** that will make any confined space a **permit-required confined space**:

- 1) hazardous atmosphere
- 2) potential for engulfment or suffocation
- 3) a layout that might trap a worker
- 4) any other serious safety or health hazard

➤ Only trained and authorized persons can work in confined spaces. It is important to recognize the hazards of confined spaces and take the proper steps to protect each worker during confined space entry work.

Confined spaces can be deadly because although they may appear to be safe, they could contain invisible hazards such as dangerous fumes, vapors, or insufficient oxygen.

➤ The only way to know if a confined space has a hazardous atmosphere is to test it using a device designed solely for that purpose.

Some confined spaces may appear to be safe because they contain a material that seems harmless.

Certain particulate materials like soil, gravel, sand, flour, or grain may temporarily support your weight but can act like quicksand when a person steps onto them.

There are an unknown number of potential liquids that pose a danger of drowning to a worker. Liquids and loose materials pose an "engulfment hazard" which means workers could sink, be captured, and become buried by the material.

Certain work areas that are confined spaces must be classified as permit-required simply because their design and configuration could easily cause workers to be stuck, get caught, and be trapped.

In addition, even if a confined space has been tested and cleared for atmospheric hazards, does not contain engulfment dangers, and it is easy to get inside of, it may still need to be classified as a permit-required confined space because of the danger of the work that will be performed.

