MODEL CONFINED SPACE ENTRY POLICY

BENEFITS

Of all of the safety hazards in the workplace, confined spaces are among the most dangerous. To comply with the OHS requirements for confined spaces, you need to have written policies and procedures in place on entry into confined spaces.

HOW TO USE THE TOOL

You must adapt this model confined space entry policy for your company’s operations and OHS program and the specific requirements and definitions in your jurisdiction’s OHS laws on confined spaces. Then ensure that all workers and supervisors who are involved in confined space work, confined space attendants and potential rescuers are trained on this policy.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Western University

Complying with confined space attendant requirements

Developing a confined space emergency plan

A checklist of areas your emergency plan for confined space should cover

A chart of the oxygen limits for confined spaces in each jurisdiction

A Model Confined Spaces Co-ordination Document you can use for multi-employer work sites
DEFINITIONS

Confined Space: A space that:
- Is large enough and configured so that a worker can bodily enter and perform assigned work;
- Has limited or restricted means for entry or exit; and
- Is not designed for continuous human occupancy.

A confined space also:
- Contains, or has the potential to contain, a hazardous atmosphere;
- Contains a material that has the potential for engulfing an entrant; or
- Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazard.

Acceptable Entry Conditions: The conditions that must exist in a confined space to allow entry and ensure workers can safely enter into and safely work within the confined space.

Entry: The action by which a person passes through an opening into a confined space. Entry is considered to occur as soon as any part of the entrant's body breaks the plane of an opening into the space.

Entry Permit: The written or printed document to allow and control entry into any confined space.

Entry Supervisor: The person responsible for determining if acceptable entry conditions are present at a confined space where entry is planned, authorizing entry, overseeing entry operations and terminating entry.

Hazardous Atmosphere: An atmosphere that may expose workers to the risk of death, incapacitation, impairment of ability to self-rescue, injury or acute illness from one or more of the following conditions:
- Flammable gas, vapor or mist in excess of 10% of its lower explosive limit (LEL);
- Airborne combustible dust at a concentration that meets or exceed its LEL;
- Atmospheric oxygen concentration below 19.5% or above 23.5%; or
- Any other atmospheric condition that is immediately dangerous to life or health.

Prohibited Condition: Any condition in a confined space that is not allowed by the permit during the time when entry is authorized.

Testing: The process by which the hazards are identified and evaluated. Testing includes specifying the tests that are to be performed in the permit space.

RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES

Employer shall:
a. Evaluate the workplace and identify confined spaces.
b. Inform workers of the existence, location of and the danger within confined spaces by posting danger signs or by any other equally effective means.
c. Provide and document training for confined space entrants, attendants and supervisors of those workers.
d. Provide all specified equipment required for entry into a confined space as outlined in this policy, maintain that equipment and ensure that workers use that equipment properly.
e. When using a contractor whose employees may enter any confined space in the employer’s workplace:
   1. Inform contractor of the employer’s confined space entry program and policy.
   2. Apprise contractor of the hazards of particular confined spaces, and precautions and procedures implemented for protection of workers in or near these spaces.
   3. Coordinate entry operations with contractor when both the employer’s workers and the contractor’s workers will be working in or near confined spaces and debrief contractor after entries.
   4. Obtain information from contractor on their confined space training and program.
   5. Debrief contractor on the hazards encountered or created in confined spaces its workers entered.

Workers shall:
a. Not enter any confined space unless specifically authorized by the employer after participating in the required training program.
b. Attend and complete any scheduled training required by their supervisor, this policy and the confined space program.
c. When selected as an entrant or attendant, perform those duties as outlined in this policy.

Enterants shall:
a. Know the hazards that may be faced in the confined space, including the mode, signs or symptoms, and consequences of exposure to them.
b. Properly use equipment as required.
c. Communicate with the attendant as necessary to enable the attendant to monitor entrant status and alert the entrant of the need to evacuate the space.
d. Alert the attendant whenever the entrant recognizes any warning sign or symptom of exposure to a dangerous situation or detects a prohibited condition.
e. Exit from the confined space as quickly as possible whenever:
   • An order to evacuate is given by the attendant or monitoring equipment alarm is activated.
   • The entrant recognizes any warning sign or symptom of exposure to a dangerous situation or detects a prohibited condition.

Attendants shall:
a. Know the hazards that may be faced during the entry into a confined space, including the mode, signs or symptoms, and consequences of exposure to them.
b. Be aware of possible behavioral affects of hazard exposure.
c. Remain outside the confined space during entry operations until relieved by another qualified attendant.
d. Communicate with entrant as necessary to monitor entrant status and alert entrant of the need to evacuate.
e. Monitor activities inside and outside space to determine if it is safe for entrant to remain in the space and, if not, order evacuation when necessary.
f. Summon rescue and emergency services when assistance for emergency exit from confined space is necessary.
g. Secure work area and keep unauthorized persons from approaching confined space.
h. Perform non-entry rescues as specified by this policy.
i. Perform no duties that might interfere with their primary duty to monitor and protect the authorized entrant in the confined space.

CONFINED SPACE ENTRY PROCEDURES

All confined spaces will be identified by [insert appropriate person, such as supervisor, safety coordinator, etc.]. Only trained and qualified workers will be authorized to act as confined space entrants and attendants. No worker shall enter a confined space without having a properly completed entry permit. Entry permit procedures are outlined below:

a. Entrants will obtain an entry permit prior to entry of a confined space.

b. The entrant will accomplish all pre-permit actions required for entering the space, such as atmospheric testing, controlling or eliminating hazards, having all required equipment on hand, providing for attendant and rescue services, etc.

c. The entrant/entry supervisor/attendant will complete all items on the permit.

d. The entry supervisor/attendant will authorize the entry and sign the permit.

e. Permits will be cancelled by the attendant/entry supervisor upon completion of the work or when any prohibited condition arises.

Testing and Monitoring

a. Test the confined space as necessary to determine if acceptable entry conditions exist before beginning entry operations. Initial testing of the atmosphere must be done from outside the confined space prior to any entry. If isolation of the space is infeasible because the space is large or part of a continuous system (such as a sewer), entry conditions will be continuously monitored where entrants are working.

b. Test or monitor the confined space as necessary to determine if acceptable entry conditions are being maintained during the course of entry operations.

c. When testing for atmospheric hazards, test first for oxygen, then for combustible gases and vapors, and then for toxic gases and vapors. Parameters for non-hazardous atmospheres are:

- Oxygen between 19.5-23.5%;
- Flammability less than 10% of the LEL.
- Toxicity less than the permissible exposure limit (PEL).

A qualified attendant must be present and monitoring the entry at all times. The attendant must not be assigned any other duties that may interfere with his attendant duties, which are outlined below.

Equipment required for confined space entry includes the equipment required for:

- Testing and monitoring;
- Ventilating;
- Communications between the entrant and attendant, and for summoning rescue;
- PPE;
- Lighting;
- Barriers/shields for openings;
- Means of ingress and egress;
- Rescue/retrieval system; and
- Any other equipment necessary for safe entry and rescue.
Rescue and Emergency Services

a. Rescue procedures must be established and reviewed prior to any worker entering a confined space.
b. Non-entry rescue is the preferred method for rescue of personnel from any confined space.
c. Rescue personnel, equipment and first aid supplies must be readily available for the duration of the entry.
d. To facilitate non-entry rescue, retrieval systems or methods shall be used whenever an authorized entrant enters a confined space. Retrieval system requirements are:
   - Each entrant shall use a chest or full body harness with a retrieval line attached at the center of the back near shoulder level or other appropriate point.
   - The other end of the retrieval line shall be attached to a mechanical device or fixed point outside of permit space enabling immediate use. A mechanical device will be used to retrieve personnel from vertical type confined spaces.
   - If injured entrant is exposed to any chemical substance, a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or similar document, shall be made available to the medical facility treating entrant.

d. If rescue should become necessary, the attendant will:
   - Immediately notify rescue personnel, 911, the local fire department, emergency medical services and the entry supervisor.
   - Attempt non-entry rescue procedures to the extent possible by the circumstances using the retrieval system.
   - NOT, under any circumstances, enter the confined space to perform a rescue.
   - Monitor the situation and be ready to give rescuers information on the victims and their status and what hazards, chemical types, concentrations, etc. may be present.

Program Review
The Confined Space Program, including this policy, will be reviewed each year and revised as necessary to ensure workers are protected from confined space hazards. A single review covering all entries in the preceding year may be conducted.

TRAINING

Only trained and qualified workers may be authorized as entrants or attendants. The training will establish proficiency in the duties required by this policy and the Confined Space Program so that the worker acquires the understanding, knowledge and skill necessary for the safe performance of their duties.

Training must be completed before a worker is assigned duties under this policy, before there is a change in assigned duties and, whenever a supervisor has reason to believe either that the worker has deviated from confined space entry procedures or there are inadequacies in the worker’s knowledge or use of this policy.

The Safety Coordinator will certify that this training has been accomplished. The certification will contain the worker’s name, signatures or initials of the trainers and the dates of training. The certification will be kept on file electronically and in hard copy.

ENTRY PERMIT

The entry permit must be the standardized employer format for each entry. The following information must be included in the written entry permit:
   1. The permit space to be entered;
2. The purpose of the entry;
3. The date and the authorized duration of the entry permit;
4. The authorized entrants within the permit space;
5. The personnel, by name, currently serving as attendants;
6. The hazards of the permit space to be entered;
7. The measure used to isolate the permit space and eliminate or control hazards before entry;
8. The acceptable entry conditions;
9. The results of initial and periodic tests, with the names or initials of the testers and when the tests were done;
10. The rescue and emergency services that can be summoned and the means for summoning them;
11. The communications procedures used by authorized entrants and attendants to maintain contact during the entry; and
12. Any other information whose inclusion is necessary in order to ensure worker safety.

Any additional permits, such as for hot work, that have been issued for work in the confined space must be attached to the entry permit.

All entry permits will be retained on file for at least one year.