

Chapter 2 - Confined Space Entry

Policy

Certain environmental conditions within a confined space pose special dangers for workers, because space configuration hampers efforts to protect them from serious hazards. Employees shall not enter a confined space until appropriate safety measures have been taken to ensure a safe environment.

Responsibilities

Safe entry into a confined space is the joint responsibility of the supervisor, the attendant and the employee who enters the space. Each entry into a confined space must be evaluated by the supervisor of the employee entering the space to determine the hazards involved and the appropriate safety measures, procedures, and controls. Supervisors must ensure that confined space entry procedures are followed and those personnel understand and comply with all safety requirements. Employees must inform their supervisor of any departure from required procedures.

It is the responsibility of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) to assist supervisors in the identification, evaluation and labeling of all confined spaces in facilities controlled by OSU.

Identification

Supervisors must report to EH&S all locations in their work space that may be considered confined spaces in order that these areas can be evaluated and labeled with a sign if required.

The configuration of some confined spaces do not readily allow for the installation of a sign. For example all sewer and storm drains that are entered through a manhole are to be considered permit required confined spaces, whether labeled as such or not. Employees must not rely solely on the existence of a warning sign. Employees must be trained by their supervisor to recognize areas that may be confined spaces and not enter these areas until a determination is made.

Definitions

Confined Space

A space defined by the existence of ALL of the following conditions:

1. Large enough and so configured that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned work; and
2. Limited OR restricted means for entry or exit; and
3. Not designed for continuous employee occupancy.

Permit-Required Confined Space

A confined space, which has in addition to the three conditions which define a confined space, ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

1. Contains or has a known potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere;
2. Contains a material with potential for engulfment of an entrant;
3. Has an internal configuration such that an entrant could be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or a floor which slopes downward and tapers to a small cross-section; OR
4. Contains recognized serious safety or health hazards.

Written Procedures

To protect employees, OSHA standards require employers to institute a “permit system” for entering certain confined spaces. All Oregon State University locations must develop written site-specific procedures for how to evaluate and enter permit-required confined spaces. The entry permit system must include written permits. Copies of completed permits should be kept as part of the departmental operating records. *OSU Safety Instruction Number 2* describes and establishes the written procedures for the Corvallis campus.

Training

Every employee who participates in a confined space entry project must have the understanding, knowledge, and skill necessary for the safe performance of duties assigned for the confined space entry, as part of the employee’s safety training. Supervisors are responsible to see that each of their employees has been provided the appropriate safety training.

Contractors

When a contractor is expected to perform work in a confined space, the university’s contractor liaison will inform the contractor if the space is considered a permit-required confined space. The contractor will be advised of the elements, which create the permit-required confined space and the associated hazards. The contractor will also be advised of the facilities written confined space procedures. The contractor will be required to contact an OSU representative at the completion of the entry to discuss any hazards confronted or created during the entry.

When both a contractor and OSU employee will be making a joint entry, the entry will be coordinated by the OSU employee’s supervisor.