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Work in Confined Spaces

Confined spaces are not always recognized, nor are the related hazards easily identified and addressed. Confined spaces can be particularly dangerous if proper precautions are not followed. Employers can help safeguard their workers by adequately preparing and training workers on the issues and hazards inherent with confined space operations. The following actions should be addressed by management:

- Know the OSHA requirements for work in confined spaces.
- Conduct a job hazard assessment that identifies the types of confined spaces for each project and determines if the confined spaces are “permit-required.” Permit-required confined spaces can include:
 - Excavations and trenches
 - Manholes and condenser pits
 - Pipe assemblies
 - Ventilation ducts
 - Tanks and containment cavities
 - Electrical transformers
 - Sumps and heat sinks
 - Underground vaults
- Identify the hazards (inherent and induced) associated with each confined space. Such hazards include:
 - Confined spaces within a confined space—one space entering another space
 - Communication and lighting problems
 - Entry and exit
 - Thermal effects
 - Oxygen-deficient atmospheres
 - Explosive or toxic gases, vapors, or fumes
 - Biological hazards
 - Falling materials
 - Noise
- Identify required personal protection equipment (PPE) and provide training in their use.
- Conduct frequent refresher training on safety procedures.
- Train and appoint entrants, attendants and rescue personnel.
- Establish general and specific emergency procedures and plans for each project activity.

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