Confined Space Hazards Workers Need to Know About


Confined Space Hazards

LOS ALAMITOS, CA, UNITED STATES, July 10, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When working in places with potential confined space hazards, any hazards must be recognized, documented, and managed. In confined spaces, it's necessary to consider both the hazards that one could expect to find in any other workspace and those that are specific to working in confined spaces or may present a more significant hazard. It's vital to know about the types of hazards present in a confined space, particularly if an entry permit is required.

What is a Hazardous Confined Space?

A confined space is an enclosure that meets all three of these criteria:

Limited Entry and Exit: The space has openings that are small or otherwise restricted, making it difficult to get in and out. Examples include hatches, tunnels, tanks, and silos.

Not Designed for Continuous Occupancy: The space is not meant for people to stay in for long periods. It's designed for a specific purpose, like storing materials or housing equipment.

Large Enough for Bodily Entry: A person can enter the space and perform some kind of work while inside. This excludes very small spaces where a person wouldn't be able to fit their body.

The confined space hazards every worker should know about are covered below.

Risk of Fire or Explosion

Employers always consider fire safety. In confined spaces, however, the risk of fire is even more important due to the possibility of limited access and exit points. A flammable atmosphere can

present a risk for both fire and explosion. This might be caused by flammable liquids or gases in the confined space or combustible dust in the atmosphere. If an explosion occurs, it could affect the structural integrity of the space.

Physical Hazards

A number of physical hazards could present risks in confined spaces. Excessive heat and cold are two of the conditions that might cause problems. Working in an enclosed space can increase the risk of heat stroke and other problems related to higher temperatures. Wearing personal protective equipment or a lack of ventilation could worsen these issues. Other physical hazards to consider include noise, vibration, inadequate lighting, and electrical hazards.

Chemical Exposure

Chemical exposure in confined spaces is also a hazard to take into account. Chemicals may be hazardous due to skin contact, ingestion, or inhalation. These hazards can exist in many working environments but can be even more important to consider in confined spaces.

Toxic Atmosphere

A toxic atmosphere might occur due to hazardous substances being present in the confined space. This is due to fire, the disturbance of various deposits or substances that are released when work is carried out. Toxins can also remain from previous processes or storage. Substances might also be released from under-scale and brickwork when work is carried out. These potential causes of a toxic atmosphere should be carefully managed to prevent consequences that can range from impaired judgment to unconsciousness or even death.

Lack of or Excess Oxygen

If oxygen levels in a confined space are too low or too high, it could present problems. Oxygen deficiency could occur in a confined space due to displacement by another gas, chemical reactions, biological processes, or air absorption into steel surfaces. A lack of oxygen reduces air quality, making it more difficult for workers to breathe. On the other hand, an excess of oxygen can increase the risk of fire or explosion when combustible materials are present. Materials that are not ordinarily combustible in standard conditions could become so when there is more oxygen in the atmosphere.

Moving Materials/Flooding

The movement of liquids, free-flowing solids, or other shifting materials can be hazardous in confined spaces. This issue could lead to drowning, suffocation, entrapment, burns, or a variety of other injuries. Barrier failure might result in flooding or the flow of liquids. The shifting or collapse of bulk materials could also cause problems. Powder solids are another material that

could move, leading to the creation of a toxic atmosphere and perhaps an increased risk of fire or explosion. Ensuring stable structures and secure storage of materials can help to manage this risk. It's also important to have a confined space rescue plan to ensure any necessary rescues will be carried out appropriately.

Safety Hazards

It's important to know the risk of safety hazards in confined spaces. For example, every business needs to consider the risk of slips and falls. Other hazards to consider are equipment with moving parts, entanglement, structural hazards, and safety issues that arise as a result of both structural and environmental dangers.

Controlling Confined Space Hazards

Following confined space safety rules and remaining vigilant about potential hazards can significantly reduce the risk of serious injuries or fatalities. Remember, entering a confined space should only be done as a last resort, with proper safeguards in place. If unsure about the safety of a confined space, err on the side of caution and seek professional help.

Employers with workers in confined spaces must engage a technical rescue team. One of the most important things for managing hazards in confined spaces is having the correct plans in place to deal with emergencies.

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