Confined Space Entry – Permit Required For Municipalities Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Municipalities are not exempt from the permit requirements for permit-required confined spaces and must comply with OSHA regulations to ensure the safety of their workers when entering confined spaces.

WHAT ARE CONFINED SPACES?

- Is large enough for a worker to enter and perform work.
- Has limited means of entry or exit.
- Is not designed for continuous occupancy.

WHAT IS THE CRITERIA TO BE DEEMED CONFINED SPACES?

1. Contains or has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere.
2. Contains a material that has the potential for engulfing an entrant.
3. Has an internal configuration such that an entrant could be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or by a floor that slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross-section; or
4. Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazard.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

POTENTIAL HAZARDS OF CONFINED SPACES FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Oxygen deficiency or enrichment: The atmosphere inside a confined space may contain less than 19.5% oxygen, which can lead to suffocation. Alternatively, it may contain a higher percentage of

oxygen, which can increase the risk of fire and explosion.

- **Heat stress:** Working in confined spaces can cause heat stress due to the lack of ventilation and high temperatures.
- **Hazardous atmospheres:** Confined spaces may contain hazardous atmospheres such as low oxygen levels, toxic gases, or flammable vapors. Without proper ventilation and air monitoring, workers can be exposed to these hazards, which can result in asphyxiation, suffocation, or poisoning.
- **Engulfment or entrapment:** Workers entering confined spaces can also be at risk of engulfment or entrapment. This can include becoming trapped in a space due to collapsed walls or floors, or being engulfed by materials such as grain, sand, or water.
- **Physical hazards:** Confined spaces can also contain physical hazards such as sharp objects, moving parts, or electrical hazards.
- **Limited access or egress:** Confined spaces are not intended for continuous occupancy and have limited access or egress. Which makes it difficult for workers to escape in the event of an emergency.
- **Psychological stress:** The nature of confined spaces can also cause psychological stress on workers.
- **Structural Hazards:** Confined spaces may contain structural hazards, such as collapsing walls or floors, which can result in serious injuries or death.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

1ST STEP – IDENTIFY CONFINED SPACES

Municipalities must develop and implement a written program to control the hazards. This includes a permit which is a written document completed by a competent person who has been trained in the hazards associated with confined spaces and in the procedures for safe entry into the space. A permit must include:

1. The purpose of the entry;
2. The date and authorized duration of the permit;

3. The location of the confined space;
4. The hazards associated with the confined space, including all atmospheric hazards, and physical hazards.
5. The measures that will be taken to isolate the confined space and eliminate or control the hazards;
6. The procedures that will be used to enter and work in the confined space;
7. The rescue and emergency procedures that will be used in the event of an emergency;
8. The names of the authorized entrants and the attendant(s) who will be present outside the confined space during entry; and
9. The signature of the person authorizing entry into the confined space.

BEST PROTECTION – ELIMINATE THE NEED TO ENTER CONFINED SPACES

Municipalities can take steps to eliminate or reduce the need for workers to enter confined spaces by:

Digning Buildings and Strucestures with Safety in Mind: This may include using open designs, installing proper ventilation systems, and avoiding the use of materials that can create hazardous atmospheres.

Proper Storage and Handling of Materials: Municipalities should take steps to ensure that materials are stored in well-ventilated areas and that proper safety protocols are in place to prevent the creation of hazardous conditions.

Implementing Remote Inspection Technologies: Remote inspection technologies, such as video cameras or drones, can be used to inspect confined spaces without the need for workers to enter.

Implementing Safe Work Practices: Safe work practices include using long-handled tools, ventilation equipment, and other measures to complete work from outside the confined space.

Providing Adequate Training: Workers should receive adequate training on the risks associated with confined spaces and the procedures for safe entry and work within them.

Identifying and evaluating confined spaces: Municipalities should identify and evaluate all confined spaces.

Implementing appropriate measures to control hazards: Municipalities should take appropriate measures to control hazards associated with confined spaces, such as improving ventilation and removing hazards.

Establishing rescue procedures: Municipalities should establish procedures for rescuing workers who become trapped or injured while working in confined spaces.

Ensuring proper communication: Municipalities should ensure that all workers who may enter confined spaces are aware of the hazards and precautions associated with these spaces.

FINAL WORD

It is important for workers to understand the risks associated with confined spaces and to follow established safety procedures. Workers should never enter a confined space without proper authorization and training.