



Facility Management Victoria Pty Ltd Confined Space Policy

LEGAL REQUIREMENT

Part 3.4 (Confined Spaces) of the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2007 states that under the regulations the employer has certain duties with relation to confined spaces:

- To consult the OH&S rep/s when undertaking hazard identification, risk assessment or control of risk processes;
- To undertake hazard identification;
- To undertake risk control and record this (one identification and risk control can be done for a "class" of confined spaces);
- To ensure that any risk associated with work in a confined space is eliminated; or if it is not practicable to eliminate the risk, reduced so far as is practicable; and
- To take specific measures in relation to certain circumstances (eg in relation to the atmosphere in confined spaces; in relation to fire, explosions and flammable gases or vapours; and so on)

DEFINITIONS:

Confined Space:

A confined space by design has limited or restricted means for entry and exit and is not intended for continuous employee occupancy. Confined spaces include but are not limited to manholes, boilers, pipelines, sewers, tunnels, silos and vats.

Permit-Required Confined Space (PRCS):

- A confined space with one or more of the following characteristics:
- Contains or has a known potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere. Three of the most common atmospheric conditions that constitute hazards are oxygen deficiency, presence of combustible gases and vapours, and toxic gases and vapours.
- Contains a material with the potential for engulfment of an entrant;
- 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 smaller cross-section; or
- Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazard.

IDENTIFICATION OF A PRCS

Each Facility Manager is to identify all confined spaces and those suspected of being a PRCS. Subsequent to identification, the Facility Manager should contact the General Manager to assist in the evaluation of those spaces.

WARNING SIGNS

A PRCS must be posted with warning signs notifying employees of any hazards that are present, and that only authorized entrants may enter the PRCS. An example warning sign may be:

DANGER
PERMIT REQUIRED CONFINED SPACE
DO NOT ENTER

EVALUATION OF PRCS CONDITIONS

Each PRCS must be evaluated to identify hazards; determine the severity of the hazards; and establish control procedures and practices by which the space may be entered safely.

Before entry into a PRCS is authorized, the conditions within the space must be tested to determine if acceptable entry conditions exist. The space must be monitored during the course of entry operations to determine if acceptable entry conditions are being maintained. When testing for atmospheric hazards first test for oxygen deficiency, then for combustible gases and vapours, and then for toxic gases and vapours.

PRE-ENTRY AND ENTRY PRACTICES & PROCEDURES

Each Facility Manager is to develop written entry procedures and practices necessary for safe permit space entry, to be included in the confined space safety plan. Such procedures must be approved by the General Manager prior to entry. Practices and procedures to be addressed include:

- isolating (locking and tagging) the PRCS;
- ventilation of the PRCS;
- providing vehicle and pedestrian barriers to protect entrants from external hazards; and,
- verifying that conditions are acceptable for entry.

LOCKING AND TAGGING

No work is to be performed until appropriate locking, tagging and/or isolation is accomplished to prevent the inadvertent actuation of operations or processes associated with the space which might expose employees to hazardous conditions.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

The following equipment is to be provided and maintained to ensure their proper use:

- testing and monitoring equipment

- ventilating equipment
- communications equipment
- personal protective equipment
- lighting equipment
- barriers and shields
- ladders
- rescue equipment
- other equipment necessary for safe entry

PERMIT SYSTEM

Before entering a PRCS an authorized employee must complete a "Confined Space Entry Permit" for approval by the Facility Manager. A copy must also be sent to the General Manager. The permit must include: identity of the space; purpose of entry; date and duration of entry; list of authorized entrants; eligible attendants and individuals to be in charge of entry; hazards of the PRCS; measures for isolation of the space; measures to control potential hazards; the acceptable entry conditions; testing and monitoring equipment and procedures; rescue services in the event of an emergency; rescue equipment to be provided on-site, if necessary; communication procedures between authorized entrants and attendants; and personal protective equipment.

TRAINING

Employees who are assigned duties that may require entry into PRCS must receive training on confined space entry procedures, the permit system, and hazard recognition and control procedures. Authorized entrants, attendants, and supervisors in charge of entry are to receive training in their respective confined space duties and responsibilities.

Training is to be provided: before employees are first assigned duties pertaining to a PRCS; whenever there is a change in assigned duties; whenever there is a change in PRCS operations that present a hazard about which an employee has not been trained; and whenever there are deviations from the entry permit procedures or inadequacies in the employees' use or knowledge of these procedures.

ENTRY INTO NON-PERMIT CONFINED SPACES

Precautions must be taken for entry into non-permit required spaces. The space atmosphere must be tested for oxygen concentration, combustible gas or vapour, and potential toxic contaminants. Any hazardous conditions detected must be reported to the supervisor and the Health and Safety Office.

Manholes and confined spaces with limited ventilation must be power ventilated with a blower (minimum capacity 750 cfm) operating at its maximum rated speed for a minimum of 5 minutes. Larger confined spaces (greater than 1000 cubic feet) must be ventilated for at least 10 minutes. The blower must be in continuous operation while anyone is in the confined space.