

CONFINED SPACES LEARNER GUIDE



Training support material for:

RIIWHS202E

Enter and work in confined spaces



Produced by:



Picture based. Plain English. Learning made

INTRODUCTION TO CONFINED SPACES



What 'enter and work in a confined space' means

A confined space is an area which is **enclosed**. It is not designed for people to go into. It may be hard to get in and out of because of a small or blocked entry/exit.

A confined space has one or more of these **dangers**:

- A dangerous level of oxygen
- Something in it (like a gas) that could cause a fire or explode
- Contaminants such as gasses, vapours or dust
- Something that could engulf (surround) you and make it hard to breathe.



Entering a confined space means your head or upper body go **into** the space.

Confined spaces may include:

- Storage tanks, tank cars, process vessels, boilers, pressure vessels, silos and other tank-like compartments
- Open-topped spaces such as pits or degreasers
- Pipes, sewers, shafts, ducts and similar structures
- Shipboard spaces entered through a small hatchway or access point, cargo tanks, cellular double bottom tanks, duct keels, ballast and oil tanks and void spaces (but not including dry cargo holds).

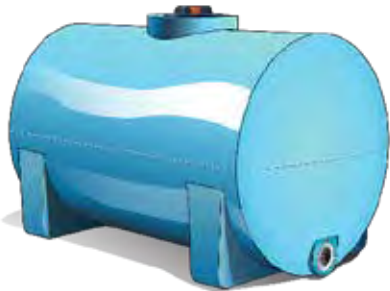


ABOUT CONFINED SPACES

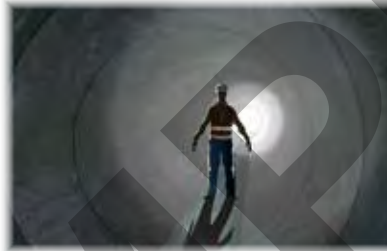


What are some examples of confined spaces?

Water or storage tanks



Ducts



Silos



Shipping containers



Roof or floor cavity



Examples of confined spaces (continued)

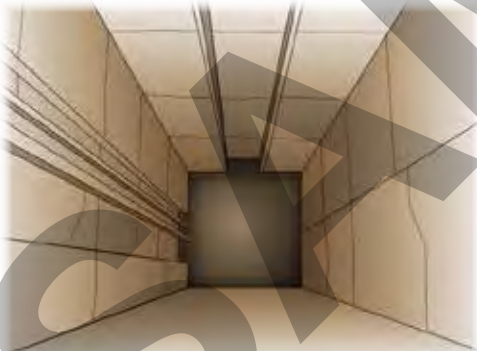
Underground sewer



Trenches, tunnels or pipes



Shafts or wells



Some spaces are NOT considered confined spaces

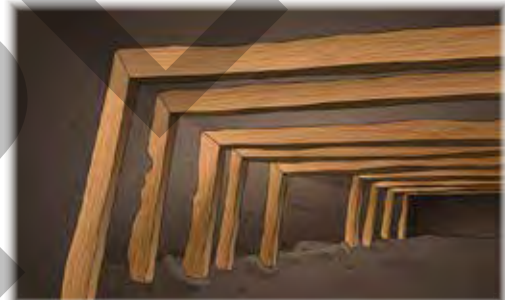
If a space is supposed to have people go into it, it is not always a confined space under the WHS act. The space must have safe entrances, exits, good lighting and airflow.

Some examples are:

Spray booths or
sand blasting booths



Mines



Cool stores
(that have large
doors for access)



Trenches

As long as they
do not have any
dangerous gasses
or fumes.



Sometimes you may not be sure if a space is a confined space or not. If you are **not** sure, it is safer to treat the space as a confined space.

If you decide a space is a confined space

If you decide that a space is a confined space there are rules you **must** follow.

You need to put up signs and barricades warning of the danger



You need an entry permit system



You need to make sure people have the right **training** to work in the space.



Your company might have Standard operating procedures (SOPs).

The SOPs will tell you what you need to do if you decide a work area is a confined space.



Who can enter a confined space?

You can only enter a confined space if your name is on the **entry permit**.

Before someone can put you on the entry permit you must be **competent** (experienced and trained).



CONFINED SPACE HAZARDS



Hazards of working in a confined space

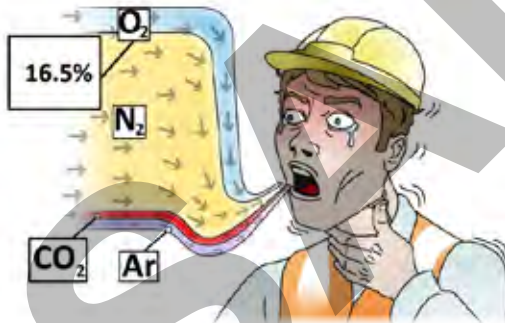
Fumes or gasses can make you unconscious (put you to sleep) or kill you



Fire or explosion from gasses



Not enough oxygen in the air to breathe properly



Noise levels can be higher in a confined space. You may damage your hearing if you do not wear hearing protection.



Hazards of working in a confined space (continued)

Loose materials could engulf (smother) you.

For example, if you are working in a wheat silo, the wheat you are standing on is a loose material.

It is easily displaced (moved) allowing you to sink and be trapped under the wheat.

You will not be able to breathe.



You may need to wear PPE such as a harness, which makes it hard to lift or carry tools or equipment.

You could strain a muscle or drop something.



Hazards of working in a confined space (continued)

The space might be too cold or too hot



You could slip, trip or fall because of hazards like rough ground or wet floor



There could be hazards you cannot see because of poor lighting



Cables or pipes could electrocute or burn you



Hazards of working in a confined space (continued)

A machine could entangle or crush you. You should always isolate the danger when doing maintenance on machinery.



Your skin could touch a dangerous chemical. This could cause a skin allergy, irritation, burns or worse.

**Biohazards**

Moulds, germs, or animals (such as insects, rats or snakes) may live in the space.



PAPERWORK, SIGNS AND BARRICADES

