CONFINED SPACE ENTRY

Purpose: To provide guidance for entry into any area meeting the definition of a Confined Space. These areas include, but are not limited to, tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, pits, manholes, tunnels, equipment housings, ductwork and pipelines.

Definitions: Permit Required Confined Spaces have the following characteristics:

- contains or has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere;
- contains material that has the potential to engulf an entrant;
- has walls that converge inward or floors that slope downward and taper into a smaller area which could trap or asphyxiate an entrant;
- contains any other recognized safety or health hazard, such as unguarded machinery, exposed live wires, or heat stress.

Non-permit Required Confined Spaces that have the following characteristics:

- large enough for an employee to enter and perform work;
- has limited or restricted means for entry or exit;
- is not designed for continuous occupancy.

Policy: Contracted services must be used for permit required confined space entry. Normal safety protocols are followed for non-permit required confined space entry.

Responsibility: It is the responsibility of each Facilities Management work force member to be familiar with the definition and identification of Confined Spaces. It is the responsibility of all Management Staff to monitor work and ensure compliance with the requirements for Confined Space entry. Failure to follow Confined Space precautions will be considered a serious safety violation that could result in personnel injury.

References: CFR 1910.146(b)
What is a Non-Permit Confined Space

What is a Non-Permit Required Confined Space?
The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) defines a confined space as any space that is:
1. Large enough for an employee to enter and perform work.
2. Has limited or restricted means for entry or exit.
3. Is not designed for continuous occupancy.

Without any other hazards present, any space that meets these requirements would be classified as a non-permit required confined space. See the flow chart below for help determining if your workplace has a non-permit required confined space:

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According to OSHA standard 1910.146(b), is this a Confined Space?

Yes  No

According to OSHA standard 1910.146(b), is this a Permit-required Confined Space?

Yes  No

Follow requirements described in OSHA standard 1910.146.

Follow other applicable OSHA standards.
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OSHA also provides a guidance tool to help you determine if a space is covered by the permit-required confined space regulations.

Non-permit required confined spaces do not contain additional hazards such as the potential of a hazardous atmosphere or the potential for workers to become engulfed or trapped by materials. These spaces require a comprehensive safety plan and employers should then follow the requirements in OSHA standard 1910.146.

Non-permit required confined spaces can be continually accessed by workers, but are still associated with inherent difficulties stemming from the tight spaces. Signage is not required by OSHA, but workers should still exercise a great deal of caution.

Example of non-permit required OSHA complaint sign

Alerting workers to the confined space and any policies related to their work should be posted before workers enter the space. Even though OSHA does not require signage as per standard 1910.146 for non-permit required confined spaces, other standards could apply depending on the work environment. Industry best practices recommend the posting of confined space accident prevention signs for these cases.