

Confined Space Rescue

Sadly, two-thirds of all confined space fatalities occur among would-be rescuers. When emotion increases, intelligence decreases. PLAN and TRAIN for emergencies...and then TRAIN some more!

In 1996 two workers died in a confined space at CanAmera Foods in Altona and a third worker is lucky to be alive. The first worker entered a grain car to retrieve a fallen “downspout” through a 20” manhole at the top using a portable ladder. The tank car had been filled with nitrogen and as such contained almost no oxygen. According to the fatality report the worker lost consciousness *within five to ten seconds.*

A second worker entered the car to assist him and upon reaching the bottom of the car, *he too collapsed.* Now aware that something was wrong, a third worker donned a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and attempted to enter through the manhole, but did not fit. He removed the SCBA, asking to have it passed to him once he was through the manhole. He became unconscious within seconds of his head passing through the manhole, and did not reach for the apparatus. The third worker was kept alive through the introduction of oxygen to the tank car.

Prevention - To prevent catastrophic consequences in confined spaces, develop and implement good confined space entry procedures and worker training so that rescue operations are not required. This includes conducting a risk assessment of all confined spaces prior to entry and strict enforcement of confined space entry procedures.

As an example, a confined space such as a steel tank may be safe to enter on a particular day, however weeks or months later, rust inside the tank has slowly depleted the atmosphere of oxygen. A worker entering the tank without following confined space procedures such as air quality testing could have deadly results.

Even a well-planned rescue can end up as a body retrieval. Rescues can be performed by any employee or a professional rescuer providing that he or she has been fully trained and qualified to act as a rescuer. Qualifications include knowledge of and experience working with all hazards associated with rescue and confined space entry operations.

Date of last revision and document confirmed current July-31-13.
If you believe this document is out of date, please contact us.

Remember:

Confined spaces are deceiving. They often appear to be harmless with no signs of danger apparent. They may even have been entered on prior occasions without incident. **NEVER, NEVER assume that conditions have not changed and that the space is safe for entry each time.**

Practices for Confined Space Rescue:

1. NEVER enter a confined space to perform a rescue without being trained and following the proper procedures as YOU may become the next victim. **More than 60% of victims are would be rescuers.**
2. Restrict access and secure the area.
3. Call 911 and notify the Supervisor
4. Rescue can only be performed by a person adequately trained in confined space rescue.
5. Effective voice communication must be maintained at all times between workers engaged in the rescue or evacuation and the person directing the rescue.
6. A rescue worker must not enter a confined space unless there is at least one additional worker located outside to render assistance.
7. A self-contained breathing apparatus, or air supplied respirator with escape bottle, must be used during rescue operations in an unknown or IDLH atmosphere.
8. Rescue procedures must apply every possible effort to eliminate, control or reduce the risk to emergency personnel responding to emergency situations including the use of mechanical ventilation.
9. Assist authorities once they arrive.

HAZARD ALERT

Confined Space Rescue

RECORD OF HAZARD ALERT

Date:	Time:
Talk Given By:	
Company Name:	Work Location Dept.:
Results of inspection, demonstration or other activity or suggestions during talk:	

List of All Employees Who Attended the Safety Talk:	
Name (PRINT)	Signature
1.	
2.	
3.	
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20.	

Signed: _____

Position Held: _____