Confined Spaces

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TOPIC: Confined Spaces

Be Aware

- A confined space is any enclosed space where there is a risk of death or serious injury from hazardous substances or dangerous conditions (e.g., lack of oxygen).
- Some are easy to identify (storage tanks, silos, enclosed drains, sewers, etc). Others are less obvious, but equally dangerous (open-topped chambers, vats, furnace combustion chambers, ductwork, and unventilated or poorly ventilated rooms).

The Dangers

- Lack of oxygen.
- Poisonous gas, fumes or vapors.
- The unexpected rush of liquids, gases or solids into a space.
- Fire and explosions (from flammable vapors, excess oxygen, etc).
- High concentrations of dust.
- Extreme heat leading to dangerous increases in body temperature.

Safety Tips

- Can the work be done another way? Work-planning or a different approach can often reduce the need for confined space working.
- Make use of safe systems for working inside such spaces.
- Ensure the entrance is large enough for rescue workers to quickly access a worker in need.
- Harness workers to lifelines running to the outside of the space.
- Improve ventilation with additional holes or vents. Mechanical ventilation may be necessary to ensure an adequate supply of fresh air.
- Use non-sparking tools and specially protected lighting where flammable or potentially explosive atmospheres are likely.
- Do not try to *sweeten* the air in a confined space with oxygen. This can greatly increase the risk of a fire or explosion.

Discussion Date: _____

Employee Participants:

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