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Confined Space Quick Review

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At IPSC there are many workplaces or areas that are considered confined spaces. While these spaces are not necessarily designed for people, they are large enough for workers to enter and perform certain jobs. These confined spaces also have limited or restricted means for entry or exit and are designed for continuous occupancy. Confined spaces include, but are not limited to, tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, pits, manholes, tunnels, equipment housings, ductwork, pipelines, etc.

All confined spaces shall be air checked and posted before entry will be allowed. The EMTs/ Safety Department will perform initial air checks for all non-permit and permit required confined spaces.

A confined space must include the following criteria:

- Not designed for continuous occupancy.
- Has limited or restricted means of access and egress.
- Must be large enough for a whole body to enter.

A non-permit confined space is a confined space that does not contain or, with respect to atmospheric hazards, have the potential to contain any hazard capable of causing death or serious physical harm.

OSHA uses the term "permit-required confined space" or "permit space" to describe a confined space that has one or more of the following characteristics beyond the initial three. Permit-required confined spaces are confined spaces that:

- May contain a hazardous or potentially hazardous atmosphere.
- May contain a material which can engulf an entrant.
- May contain walls that converge inward or floors that slope downward and taper into a smaller area which could trap or asphyxiate an entrant.
- May contain other serious physical hazards, such as unguarded machines, exposed live wires, or heat stress.
- Must be identified by the employer who must inform exposed employees of the existence and location of such spaces and their hazards.

Who is Involved

- Entry Supervisor—The person (such as the employer, supervisor, or contract administrator) responsible for

determining if acceptable entry conditions are present at a permit space where entry is planned, for authorizing entry and overseeing entry operations, and for terminating entry.

- Attendant—An individual stationed outside one or more permit spaces who monitors the authorized entrants and who performs all attendant's duties assigned in the employer's permit space program.
- Entrant—Employee who is authorized by the employer to enter a permit space.

What to Do

- Do not enter permit-required confined spaces without being trained and without having a permit to enter.
- Review, understand, and follow employer's procedures before entering permit-required confined spaces and know how and when to exit.
- Before entry, identify any physical hazards.
- Before and during entry, test and monitor for oxygen content, flammability, toxicity, or explosive hazards as necessary.
- Use employer's fall protection, rescue, air-monitoring, ventilation, lighting, and communication equipment according to entry procedures.
- Maintain contact at all times with a trained attendant either visually, verbally, or by two-way radio. This monitoring system enables the attendant and entry supervisor to order you to evacuate and to alert appropriately trained rescue personnel to rescue entrants when needed.
- Notify and ensure that rescue personnel are on sight and available before entering any permit required confined space.

Remember that care must always be taken while working in a confined space. Take the time to do things right. Never assume it is safe to go into a confined space. Always make sure that procedures are followed and every step has been taken to ensure your safety while working in confined spaces.