

Know the Risks | Is This a Confined Space?



CONFINED SPACES



Valve pits—where gas can accumulate—are often over-looked as confined spaces.



Excavations deeper than 1.2 m (4 ft.) may be a confined space.



Many structures have confined space crawl spaces.



BE AWARE

Some confined spaces are more well-known than others, but all of them pose hazards. It is critical to be aware of lesser-known confined spaces, such as:

- Water storage tanks
- Excavations
- Storage containers
- Process vessels
- Frac tanks
- Valve pits
- Mud tanks
- Pipelines
- Pits
- Building crawl spaces



DID YOU KNOW?

Open top vessels are considered a restricted space in Alberta, while in British Columbia and Saskatchewan they are a confined space. Learn more about the hazards in this [5-minute video](#), part of ESC's [Surface Water Transfer Video Series](#). (Go to 3:22 for confined space.)



Water storage vessels pose a drowning hazard and can be considered a confined space.

ESC Course: [Confined Space Entry and Monitor](#)

ESC Resource: [Confined Space Video Series](#)

CAPP: [Confined Space Code of Practice](#)

WorkSafeBC: [Hazards of Confined Spaces](#)

Alberta OH&S: [Code 2018 Explanation Guide – Part 5 Confined Spaces](#)

CSA: [Z1006:16 Management of Work in Confined Spaces](#)

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Confined space hazards fall into two categories:

1) Work activity

The presence of a worker or work materials can introduce hazards. E.g., welding gasses can rise; ungrounded wash wands can create an ignition source; or actuating a valve in a valve pit may allow a previously isolated leak to vent.

2) The space itself

Risks include exposure to gas or fumes, drowning, asphyxiation, fire and explosion, entrapment, and engulfment. When planning confined space work, consider:

- **Access and egress.** Ensure workers can get in and out of the area quickly.
- **Atmosphere and contents.** Be aware of hazardous vapours or combustible materials in the space.
- **Static or dynamic conditions.** Check if vapour or additional fluid could enter through piping or ventilation. Be aware that pyrophoric materials, such as iron sulphide, can dry out and become an autoignition hazard.

Life Saving Rule

This safety bulletin relates to the Confined Space [Life Saving Rule](#).



**CONFINED
SPACE**

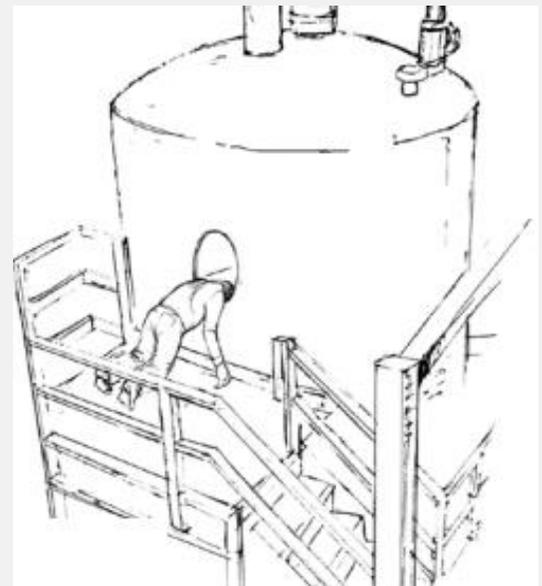
Obtain authorization before entering a confined space.

- I confirm energy sources are isolated
- I confirm the atmosphere has been tested and is monitored
- I check and use my breathing apparatus when required
- I confirm there is an attendant standing by and a rescue plan is in place



TAKE-AWAYS

- Identify all confined spaces.
- Ensure workers are trained in confined space entry.
- Know the regulations and jurisdiction requirements.
- Post signage to prevent accidental entry.
- Ensure workers conducting confined space work participate in the hazard assessments.
- Monitor workers continually, as the environment can change quickly.



A quick look can be fatal – Do not pass the plane of the opening of a confined space without a safety plan and proper PPE. Even ‘just a peak’ is considered entry and can result in a fatal outcome.