



S&W READY MIX CONCRETE COMPANY	PLANT #:
CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL / SAFETY PROGRAM	JUNE
CONFINED SPACE ENTRY - MONTHLY TRAINING TOPIC	

DON'T GET CAUGHT IN THE TRAP

Most of us are reluctant to enter enclosed or confined spaces. You can use this instinct to your safety advantage when working in confined spaces in the workplace.

Some confined spaces are easy to recognize: **tunnels, ducts, sewers, silos, tanks, vats, vaults, boilers, and any vessel entered through a hole or a manhole.** Other confined spaces include **open pits, tanks with open tops, enclosures entered from the bottom and even trenches.** All confined spaces should be considered dangerous.

Lack of ventilation causes most of the dangers in confined spaces. A lack of oxygen or a build-up of toxic or flammable gases can all be caused or made worse by poor ventilation. Chemicals used or stored in a confined space will affect its atmosphere. So will worker activities. The atmosphere can change quickly and without warning.

Combustion activity such as welding, heating, cutting, brazing or even machine operation will deplete the oxygen of the confined space. So can corrosion, rust and oxidization. Natural or chemical processes can produce toxic gases. The lack of natural ventilation in confined spaces holds these dangerous vapors in, creating a potentially hazardous atmosphere.

Here are some suggested precautions for safe entry and work in confined spaces:

- Workers and supervisors must be familiar with the company's confined space safety procedures and equipment, including rescue response. Studies show more than half of confined space fatalities are persons attempting to rescue the original victim.
- Workers and supervisors must be informed of all potential hazards of a confined space. If cleaners or solvents are to be used, what chemical reactions may be expected? Will extremes of temperature be a problem? What about other physical hazards such as poor visibility or slippery surfaces? Are there pipes or supply lines to be bypassed, disconnected or blocked off? Is there adequate access? Even if the atmosphere is safe at first, will the activity that takes place after safe entry cause problems?
- A written work or entry permit should be obtained, specifying conditions for safe entry into the confined space.
- An attendant, fully trained and equipped, should be posted outside the confined space to communicate with and possibly rescue the worker inside. Post signs, secure the site as "restricted."
- Use lockout/tagout procedures to ensure more safety in the confined space. This will help prevent the following: hazardous materials from entering the work area, electrical shock or the start-up of equipment while the space is occupied. If there is any possibility of explosion, all sources of ignition in the confined space as well as the immediate area must be eliminated.
- Proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn and used correctly in a confined space. This will vary depending on the task at hand and the nature of exposure. This may include respirators, body coverings, head, hand, foot and eye protection.



Confined space entry requires authorization, proper training and the right equipment. Make sure you know what you are doing if you are working in confined spaces.