

KCA TOOL BOX TALK: Confined Spaces



TEAMWORK
IMPROVES SAFETY

Signatures

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Confined spaces include manholes, crawl spaces, tunnels, and other work areas with limited space to get in or out and to work. Workers in confined spaces can be at risk for injury or death from lack of oxygen, buildup of explosive or toxic gases, uncontrolled water, falling materials, and electrical hazards. Workers have also been injured or died entering a confined space to rescue another worker.

Here is an Example: Philip went into a manhole to close a gate valve. He immediately collapsed. The foreman called firefighters to the scene. Before the firefighters entered the space to recover Philip's body, they put on self-contained breathing apparatuses. Philip died before he could be rescued. An investigation showed that the manhole contained methane gas. It had not been tested or ventilated before Philip entered.

1. How could this incident have been prevented?
2. What other hazard did that space pose?
3. Have you ever been injured or become ill while working in a confined space or known anyone who has? If so, what happened?

Preventing Accidental Injury or Death:

Treat all confined spaces as hazardous and never enter a confined space:

- Without proper training, which your employer is required to provide.
- Before the air is tested for oxygen, flammable vapors, and toxic chemicals.
- Before the structure has been checked to make sure it will not collapse.
- Without a dependable way of communicating with a person outside of the space.
- Without appropriate personal protective equipment provided by your employer, such as a self-contained breathing apparatus.

Exit the space immediately if an unsafe condition develops. Ask your supervisor who you must alert onsite if this happens.

Ask your supervisor to explain the company's written confined-space program and emergency plan. Your employer should provide time during work for rescue drills.

For more information visit OSHA REGULATION: 1910.146

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Keystone Contractors Association Jon@KeystoneContractors.com 717-731-6272