

>> TOOLBOX TALK – Working in a Confined Space

What is a confined space?

Confined space means an enclosed or partially enclosed space that is not designed or intended for human occupancy except for the purpose of performing work; has restricted means of access and egress; and may become hazardous to a person entering it as a result of its design, construction, location or atmosphere, the materials or substances in it, or any other conditions relating to it.



What are the risks?

Many confined spaces contain hazardous substances or dangerous conditions. Hazards and threats could include:

- **Poor Air Quality** - Atmospheres with oxygen content less than 20% (deficient) or more than 22% (enriched) are not safe.
- **Toxic Gasses** - Hydrogen sulphide, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, smoke, ammonia, chlorine, etc. are all potentially deadly.
- **Flammable Atmospheres** - A highly explosive atmosphere can be created when finely ground combustible materials such as grain, carbon, cellulose, fibers, plastics or flammable liquids are present.
- **Mechanical, Electrical or Physical Hazards** - Examples include moving parts, structural hazards, noise, temperature and visibility.
- **Loose Materials that May Engulf or Smother** - Shifting or collapse of bulk material, barrier failures, etc.

To effectively control the risks associated with working in a confined space, a Confined Space Hazard Assessment and Control Program should be implemented for your workplace. Before putting together this program, make sure to review the specific regulations that apply to your workplace or are stated in the provincial legislation.

What can we do to protect ourselves?

The dangers and risks associated with confined spaces are not always obvious. All hazards must be identified and either eliminated prior to entry, or all precautions must be taken for the safety of the person entering the confined space. Some items to consider prior to entering a confined space include, (but are not limited to):

- Conduct a risk assessment and know the practices and procedures.
- Ensure sources containing a hazardous substance leading to the confined space are safely and completely blocked off or disconnected.
- Ensure a written work permit has been developed.
- Ensure that adequate atmospheric testing and monitoring is being conducted with an approved air quality monitor.
- Determine the proper personal protective equipment required.
- Ensure a competent watch person is present with an effective emergency response plan. The attendant must have communication with the emergency response team & the person in the confined space at all times.

A full list of roles and responsibilities can be found under PART XXVII CONFINED SPACE ENTRY under the Newfoundland and Labrador OHS Act and Regulations.

Training

Both entrant and attendant must have completed a 2 day Confined Space Entry (CSE) course that is approved by Workplace NL (for example, NLCSA's 2-day CSE course). Additional training that may be required includes: Fit Testing; Gas detection; First Aid; WHMIS; Fall Protection; and any training specific to the task at hand. At a minimum, CSE certification training is required for attendants as prescribed by Workplace NL, keeping in mind that attendants are not permitted to enter a confined space according to OHS legislation. Knowledge and skills are required to fulfill the responsibilities of the work of an attendant as described in Newfoundland and Labrador OHS Regulation s.513(3) and s.513(4).

Above all else, ensure that all personnel involved in the confined space process are competent to do the job safely. Many workers are injured and killed each year while working in confined spaces. Unless you are trained in confined space hazards and how to control them, never enter a confined space.

Complete and attach Toolbox Meeting Form and process as per company policy.

Content adapted for NLCSA, with permission, from toolbox talk by the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association.



TOOLBOX MEETING FORM

Date: _____ Project: _____

Supervisor: _____ No. in Crew: _____ No. Attending: _____

Review Last Meeting:

	Names of Attendees (Signature Required)
Topics Discussed (policies, practices, procedures, hazard assessment):	
Suggestions Offered:	
Action(s) to be Taken:	
Injuries/Accidents Reviewed:	

Supervisor's Remarks: _____

Signature: _____