

## Confined Spaces—Deadly Spaces

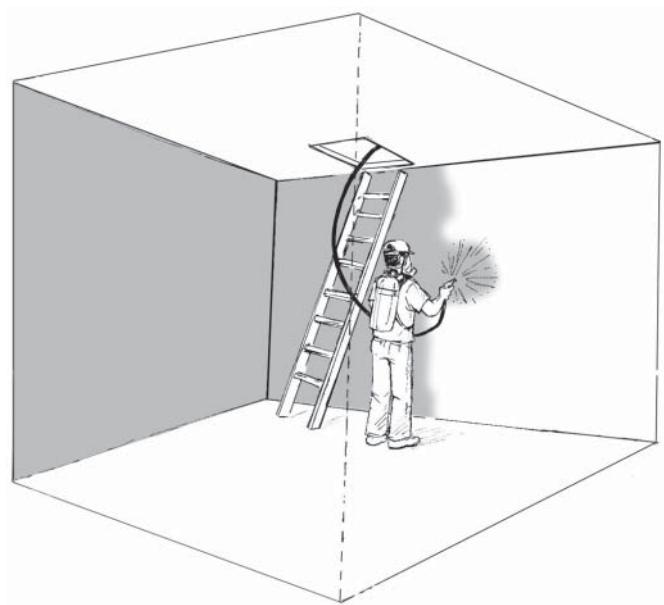
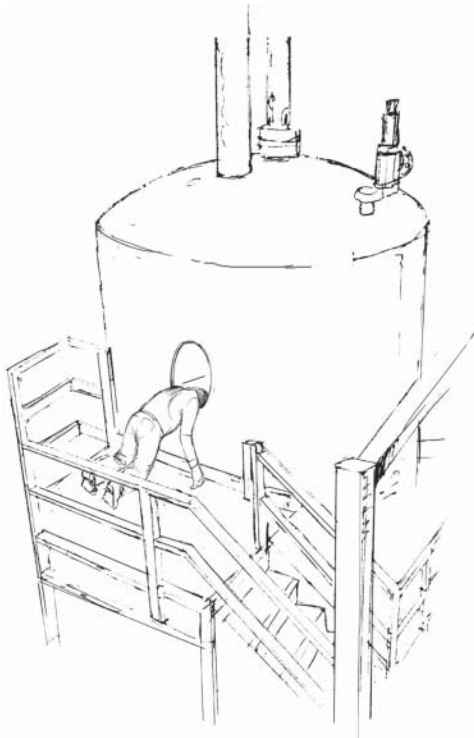
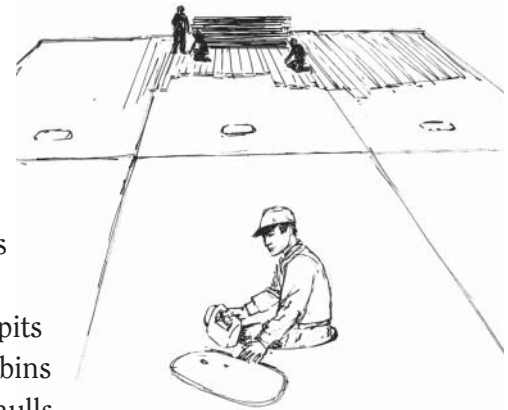
### What's a confined space?

A confined space is an enclosed or partially enclosed area that is big enough for a worker to enter. It is not designed for someone to work in regularly, but workers may need to enter the confined space for tasks such as inspection, cleaning, maintenance, and repair. Many confined spaces have small openings, which can make entry and exit difficult and can complicate rescue procedures.

A confined space can be deadly. You must follow special precautions and procedures before you enter. Even if you just put your head through the opening, you are entering a confined space. **NEVER enter a confined space unless you have the training and knowledge to work safely.**

Some examples of confined spaces:

- Tanks
- Boilers
- Vats
- Kilns
- Vaults
- Silos
- Pipelines
- Sewers
- Manure pits
- Storage bins
- Double hulls
- Pumping stations
- Pits, sumps
- Vessels
- Manholes
- Water reservoirs
- Other similar spaces



*The pictures on this page show three confined spaces where workers died or were injured.*

## Why are confined spaces deadly?

Entering a confined space without the proper precautions could result in serious injuries or even in death. Why? Here are some examples:

- **Not enough oxygen**

If there is not enough oxygen in the air, you could die. If you enter a space without enough oxygen (or even place your head inside the opening), you may not be able to escape or call for help.

- **Toxic gases**

The space might contain a toxic (poisonous) gas. Work such as welding or painting inside the confined space might release deadly substances into the air. Toxic gases might enter the space from piping or another opening.

- **Explosion**

You can't smell or see some explosive gases so you might not know they are in the air. A spark or other ignition source might result in an explosion. Many dusts and chemicals can also explode.

- **Being trapped, crushed, or buried**

Loose or unstable materials might fall on you and trap or bury you. A liquid, a hazardous gas, or steam might flow into the space. You might get caught in a piece of equipment that starts moving.

Confined spaces can be deadly spaces. Whenever possible, avoid entering these spaces. For example, use a device or a piece of equipment that will allow you to do the work from the outside. It may also be possible to change the space by making it easier to enter and exit. If you do this, it may not be considered a confined space, but it may still have some hazards.

## How can workers be protected?

Employers, supervisors, and workers must take steps to make sure work is performed safely.

1. **Avoid entry.** Change the space or the work so that you don't have to enter.
2. **Make sure a hazard assessment has been done.** A qualified person must identify the hazards and provide written procedures to eliminate or control the hazards.
3. **Plan ahead.** Plan for a safe entry and have an emergency rescue plan.
4. **Test the air.** Check that there is enough oxygen and that any other substances are at safe levels.
5. **Ventilate the space.** Bring in enough fresh air so that the air you are breathing inside is safe to breathe.
6. **Follow safe work procedures.** Before you enter a confined space, you must complete specific training. Do not put your head into a confined space without training.
7. **Use the right equipment.** Make sure you have the equipment you need to get in and out safely and to work safely in the space.
8. **Use safety precautions.** Do not enter until all the safety precautions are in place and you have been authorized to enter.

**Enter only when you KNOW it is safe.**



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