

Confined Spaces: Essential Safety Precautions

Confined spaces pose significant hazards to workers and require careful management to ensure safety. Here are key requirements for working safely in confined spaces:

Definition and Hazards

A confined space is defined as an area that is:

- Partially or fully enclosed
- Not designed for continuous human occupancy
- Where atmospheric hazards may occur due to its construction, location, contents, or work activities

Physical hazards are often more dangerous inside confined spaces compared to outside.

Confined Space Program

Employers must develop a written confined space program that includes:

- Methods to recognize confined spaces
- Hazard assessment processes
- Plans for controlling hazards
- Worker training requirements
- Entry permit system

The program must be developed in consultation with the joint health and safety committee or representative.

Key Safety Requirements

Hazard Assessment:

- A competent person must perform a written hazard assessment before each entry
- Assessment must identify potential hazards in the space and from work activities

Entry Plans:

- Plans must be developed to eliminate hazards or control risks
- Must address duties, rescue procedures, PPE, isolation of energy sources, atmospheric testing, etc.

Worker Training:

- Workers must be trained on hazards, safe work practices, and entry procedures
- Training records must be maintained

Entry Permits:

- Required for each entry and must be verified by a competent person
- Must include hazards, controls, personnel, equipment, atmospheric testing results, etc.

Atmospheric Testing:

- Competent person must test atmosphere before and during entry
- Results must be recorded on entry permit

Attendants:

- Must be present outside entrance during entry

- Responsible for monitoring workers and summoning rescue if needed

Rescue Procedures:

- Written on-site rescue procedures must be developed
- Adequate number of trained rescue personnel must be available

By following these key requirements, employers can help ensure the safety of workers entering confined spaces. Proper planning, training, testing and monitoring are essential.

For more information, refer to NCC T&D's relevant IMS procedures or consult our HSE Department for expert guidance and training resources aligned with Saudi Arabian regulatory requirements.