Confined Space Management Plan

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Purpose and Scope

This Confined Space Management Plan sets out the arrangements [Company Name] will implement to eliminate or minimise risks to workers and others arising from work in or near confined spaces. It is designed to comply with relevant Australian work health and safety (WHS) legislation, regulations and Codes of Practice.

This plan applies to all confined space work undertaken by [Company Name] in the following sectors:

- Plumbing and gasfitting (e.g. sewer manholes, tanks, pits, valve chambers)
- Civil construction and earthworks (e.g. stormwater systems, culverts, shafts, pipelines)
- Air conditioning and refrigeration (e.g. plant rooms with restricted access, ductwork, pits)
- Mining and resources (e.g. sumps, bins, hoppers, process vessels, underground headings)
- Fire protection services (e.g. pump rooms, tanks, valve pits, fire water storage)

It covers all workers, including employees, labour hire workers, apprentices, contractors, subcontractors and visitors who may be involved in or affected by confined space work.

Definitions

Confined Space

For the purpose of this plan, a confined space is an enclosed or partially enclosed space that:

- is not designed or intended to be occupied by a person; and
- is, or is designed or intended to be, at normal atmospheric pressure while any person is in the space; and
- is or is likely to be a risk to health and safety from:
  - an atmosphere that does not have a safe oxygen level; or
  - contaminants, including airborne gases, vapours and dusts, that may cause injury from fire or explosion; or
  - harmful concentrations of any airborne contaminants; or
  - engulfment.

Examples relevant to this plan include, but are not limited to:

- Sewer and stormwater manholes, inspection chambers and pumping stations
- Valve pits and meter pits for gas, water or fire systems
- Storage tanks, silos, process vessels and pressure vessels (when opened)

- Large pipelines, culverts, ducts and shafts
- Sumps, wet wells, lift pits and service trenches with restricted access
- Underground mine headings, voids and sumps (where they meet the definition)

Other Key Terms

- **Authorised entrant** – a worker who has been trained, assessed as competent and authorised by [Company Name] to enter a specific confined space.
- **Standby person (attendant)** – a competent person assigned to remain outside the confined space to monitor conditions and the safety of persons inside, maintain communication and initiate emergency procedures.
- **Permit issuer** – a competent person authorised by [Company Name] to issue, suspend and cancel confined space entry permits.
- **Confined space entry permit** – a formal written authority that specifies the confined space, work to be done, hazards identified, control measures, isolation requirements, atmospheric testing, authorised entrants, standby person, duration and emergency arrangements.
- **Isolation** – the process of preventing the introduction of any materials, substances, energies or services into the confined space (e.g. lock-out/tag-out of pumps, valves and electrical supplies).
- **Safe oxygen level** – an oxygen concentration in air of between 19.5% and 23.5% by volume.
- **Engulfment** – to be swallowed up in or overwhelmed by material, such as water, sand, soil, grain or other loose material.

Roles, Responsibilities and Consultation

Officers (Company Directors and Senior Management)

Officers of [Company Name] must exercise due diligence to ensure that the organisation complies with its WHS duties in relation to confined spaces by:

- Acquiring and keeping up-to-date knowledge of confined space WHS obligations
- Understanding the operations that involve confined spaces and associated hazards
- Ensuring appropriate resources and processes are provided for:
  - hazard identification and risk assessment
  - implementation and maintenance of control measures
  - provision of training, supervision and equipment
  - emergency response capability

- Verifying that this Confined Space Management Plan is implemented, monitored and reviewed.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors are responsible for day-to-day implementation of this plan, including:

- Ensuring no worker enters a confined space without a valid permit and required training
- Ensuring confined space risk assessments are completed and reviewed as required
- Planning work so that confined space entry is eliminated where reasonably practicable
- Ensuring isolation, ventilation, atmospheric testing and other controls are implemented
- Allocating competent permit issuers, standby persons and entrants
- Ensuring emergency response arrangements and equipment are in place before entry
- Monitoring compliance with the plan and addressing non-conformances.

Permit Issuers

Permit issuers must:

- Verify that a suitable and sufficient confined space risk assessment has been completed
- Confirm that all required isolations, purging, cleaning and control measures are in place
- Ensure atmospheric testing and monitoring equipment is fit for purpose and calibrated
- Specify on the permit:
  - confined space location and description
  - work to be performed
  - hazards and control measures
  - authorised entrants and standby person
  - PPE requirements
  - communication methods
  - emergency procedures and rescue equipment
  - permit validity period
- Issue, suspend or cancel permits as required and ensure permits are closed out.