

Confined Space Policy

SAMPLE

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Purpose

This Confined Space Policy sets out [Company Name]'s arrangements for identifying, assessing and controlling risks associated with work in or near confined spaces. It aims to prevent fatalities, serious injuries and illnesses arising from:

- Hazardous atmospheres (e.g. oxygen deficiency, toxic gases, flammable vapours)
- Engulfment and entrapment
- Restricted entry and exit
- Mechanical, electrical and stored energy hazards
- Psychological stress, fatigue and heat strain.

This policy applies to all workers, contractors and visitors engaged in plumbing and gasfitting, civil construction and earthworks, air conditioning and refrigeration, and mining and resources activities undertaken by or on behalf of [Company Name].

Scope

This policy applies to all workplaces under the management or control of [Company Name] where confined space hazards may be present, including but not limited to:

- Sewer pits, manholes, inspection chambers and pump stations
- Tanks, vessels, silos, pressure vessels and boilers
- Stormwater pits, culverts, pipelines and service tunnels
- Trenches and excavations that may meet the definition of a confined space
- Ductwork, plant rooms with restricted access, and large HVAC components
- Underground mining headings, sumps, ore passes and voids
- Storage bins, hoppers and process vessels.

It covers planning, consultation, risk management, entry permits, training, emergency response, monitoring and review of all confined space work, whether performed by [Company Name] workers or contractors.

Definitions

Confined Space

For the purposes of this policy, a confined space is an enclosed or partially enclosed space that:

1. Is not designed or intended to be occupied by a person; and
2. Is, or is designed or intended to be, at normal atmospheric pressure while any person is in the space; and
3. Is or is likely to be a risk to health and safety from:
 - An atmosphere that does not have a safe oxygen level

- Contaminants, including airborne gases, vapours and dusts, that may cause injury from fire or explosion or toxicity
- Engulfment.

Examples relevant to this policy include sewer manholes, valve chambers, storage tanks, culverts, process vessels, large air-conditioning ducts, refrigeration pits and underground mining voids.

Other Key Terms

- **Atmospheric testing** – The process of using calibrated equipment to measure oxygen levels, flammable gases and vapours, and airborne contaminants in a confined space.
- **Authorised person** – A person appointed by [Company Name] with the competency and authority to approve confined space entry permits.
- **Confined Space Entry Permit** – A written authorisation that specifies the confined space, work to be done, hazards, controls, entry duration, and persons permitted to enter.
- **Competent person** – A person who has acquired, through training, qualification or experience, the knowledge and skills to carry out the task.
- **Stand-by person** – A competent person stationed outside the confined space who continuously monitors the work and initiates emergency response if required.
- **Engulfment** – Being swallowed up in or immersed by a material, such as soil, sand, grain, water or slurry.
- **Isolation** – The process of preventing the introduction of any materials, substances, mechanical, electrical, hydraulic, pneumatic, chemical, thermal or other energy into the confined space.

Legislative Framework

[Company Name] will manage confined space risks in accordance with relevant WHS legislation, including, as applicable:

- Work Health and Safety Act (jurisdiction-specific)
- Work Health and Safety Regulations (jurisdiction-specific), including confined space provisions
- Safe Work Australia Code of Practice: Confined Spaces
- Electrical safety legislation and regulations
- Applicable mining safety legislation and regulations.

Where client or site-specific requirements exceed this policy, [Company Name] will comply with the higher standard.

Roles and Responsibilities

Officers (e.g. Directors, Senior Management)

Officers must exercise due diligence to ensure [Company Name] complies with its WHS duties regarding confined spaces by:

- Providing adequate resources for implementation of this policy (training, equipment, competent personnel)
- Ensuring effective systems are in place for hazard identification, risk assessment and control
- Verifying that confined space work is planned, supervised and reviewed
- Ensuring emergency response arrangements are tested and maintained.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing this policy at operational level. They must:

- Ensure confined spaces are identified, documented and, where practicable, signposted
- Confirm that no entry to a confined space occurs without a current Confined Space Entry Permit
- Ensure risk assessments are completed by competent persons before confined space work
- Verify that all required controls are in place before authorising entry
- Ensure workers and contractors are trained and competent for their confined space roles
- Coordinate with principal contractors, mine managers and other PCBU's to manage shared risks
- Suspend or stop work if conditions deviate from the permit or become unsafe.

Health and Safety Personnel

Health and safety personnel must:

- Assist with identification of confined spaces and development of confined space registers
- Provide expert advice on risk assessment and control measures
- Support the development and delivery of confined space training
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy through inspections, audits and incident investigations
- Maintain records relating to confined space work, training, permits and incidents.