



Confined Spaces and Safety

Confined spaces include manholes, crawl spaces, and tunnels. These are areas that are hard to get in or out of and have limited room to work. Workers in confined spaces can be at risk for injury or death from low oxygen, buildup of explosive or toxic gases, uncontrolled water, falling materials, and electrical hazards. Workers have also been injured or died entering a confined space to rescue another worker.

Philip's Story

Philip went into a manhole to close a gate valve. He collapsed right away. The foreman called firefighters to the scene. A firefighter put on a self-contained breathing apparatus before entering the space to recover Philip's body. Philip died before he could be rescued. An investigation showed that the manhole contained methane gas and had not been tested or ventilated before Philip entered.

- ✘ What caused this incident?
- ✘ How could this have been prevented?
- ✘ Have you ever been injured or become ill while working in a confined space, or do you know someone who has? If so, what happened?

Remember This

- Treat **all** confined spaces as hazardous. Ask your supervisor to explain the company's written confined space program and emergency plan. Your employer should provide time during work for rescue drills.
- **Always** follow these precautions before entering a confined space:
 - Get proper training, which your employer is required to provide.
 - Test the air for oxygen content, for flammable gases and vapors, and for possible toxic air contaminants.
 - Check conditions for water and electrical hazards.
 - Inspect the structure to make sure it will not collapse or drop any materials.
 - **Do not** enter a confined space without someone monitoring you. Maintain a dependable way to communicate with a person outside the space.
 - Use appropriate personal protective equipment provided by your employer for the known hazards, such as a self-contained breathing apparatus.
- **Leave** the confined space *immediately* if you see an unsafe condition. Ask your supervisor who you must alert onsite if you see an unsafe condition.

How can we stay safe today?

What will we do at the worksite to prevent injuries, illnesses, or deaths from working in confined spaces?

OSHA Standards: 1926 Subpart AA (1926.1200-1213)



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- ✓ Treat **all** confined spaces as hazardous. **Do not** enter a confined space without someone monitoring you.
- ✓ **Never** enter a space until (1) the air is tested for oxygen content, for flammable gases and vapors, and for possible toxic air contaminants and (2) the structure is checked to make sure it will not collapse or drop any materials.
- ✓ **Leave** the space *immediately* if you see an unsafe condition.

**GET
INFORMATION**

CDC/NIOSH INFO: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-800-232-6348 | [cdc.gov/info](https://www.cdc.gov/info) | [cdc.gov/niosh/construction](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/construction)
CPWR: Contact 301-578-8500 | cpwr-r2p@cpwr.com | www.cpwr.com/toolbox-talks
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