

EH&S FACT SHEET

Environment, Health and Safety Information for the Berkeley Campus

Confined Space Entry Program

What's a Confined Space?

A confined space is a space that is large enough for a person to bodily enter and may contain a noxious atmosphere or some other life threatening hazard. People may need to enter confined spaces to perform inspections, conduct maintenance, complete construction, conduct experiments, or install equipment. Examples of confined spaces that are large enough for a person to enter may include air handling ducts, crawl spaces, large pipes, trenches, tanks, vaults, pressure vessels, pits, plenums, culverts, manholes, drying ovens, tunnels, pressure chambers, large autoclaves, sump pump wells, sewers, etc.

Hazards

Some hazards that may be present in a confined space include lack of oxygen, presence of poisonous or hazardous gas, heat or cold, machinery or other mechanical hazards, asbestos, flammable dust or liquids, noise, electricity, fall or trip hazards, poor access for emergency response, etc.

Entering Safely

CalOSHA requires that all hazards be assessed and hazard controls put in place prior to anyone entering a confined space. For the purposes of the CSE Program, "entry" into a confined space occurs whenever a person's head is placed inside the space. The CSE Program helps responsible persons assess hazards and create a safe entry procedure for a specific confined space.

Program application

The CSE Program is actually two separate programs each focused on a different type of work activity in a confined space. If the work being completed is related to Construction, Telecommunications or Electrical installation or repairs on a facility, then the 'Construction Confined Space Entry' program is to be applied. If the work being completed is of any other nature, then the 'General Confined Space Entry' program (otherwise known as the "Permit Required Program") is to be applied. The difference in the programs is how the hazards are assessed, the degree of training required, and documentation of activities.

Program requirements

Both programs result in a documented procedure for a specific confined space that controls hazards and assures that all entrants into the space work in safe conditions. Among the issues addressed are continuous atmospheric monitoring, communication between entrants inside the space and attendants outside, emergency response and rescue preparation, dealing with contractors entering a confined space, documenting hazard assessment and control strategies, and safe-entry training specific to the confined space.



Training

Training on safe entry procedures for a specific Confined Space, as well as on the CSE program, is mandatory for those persons entering the space, for those who supervise them, as well as for those who are attending the entry and rescue personnel. In addition, general confined space entry training is required for department DSCs who work in departments where confined spaces are located.

Hazard Evaluation

Help in assessing confined spaces, developing safe entry procedures for specific confined spaces on any University property, and training for faculty and staff on CSE programs, is available through EH&S. If you suspect that any location in your department may be classified as a confined space, please contact EH&S at 642-3073 to arrange a consultation and determination of how to safely work around and in the area of concern.

