

# MOCGA Toolbox Talk

# Confined Space Safety



**Introduction:** Confined spaces can be found almost anywhere. They're everywhere in manufacturing environments and throughout our communities. Sewers, valve pits, electrical vaults and tanks are just a few examples of confined spaces. Dangerous hazards are numerous. They include falls from heights, asphyxiation, electrocution and heat stress. Make sure everyone on the jobsite understands the hazards of confined spaces, and your safety rules and expectations.

## SAFETY TIPS

### BY DEFINITION, A CONFINED SPACE:

- Is large enough for an employee to enter fully and perform assigned work;
- Is not designed for continuous occupancy by the employee; and
- Has a limited or restricted means of entry or exit.
- These spaces may include underground vaults, tanks, storage bins, pits and diked areas, vessels, silos and other similar areas.

### BY DEFINITION, A PERMIT-REQUIRED CONFINED SPACE HAS ONE OR MORE OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS:

- Contains or has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere;
- Contains a material with the potential to engulf someone who enters the space;
- Has an internal configuration that might cause an entrant to be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or by a floor that slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross section; and/or
- Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazards.

### FIND MORE INFO ABOUT CONFINED SPACES AT [WWW.OSHA.GOV](http://WWW.OSHA.GOV)

- Confined spaces in construction: 1926 Subpart AA
- General industry requirements: 29 CFR 1910.146

### CONFINED SPACE HAZARD REVIEW

- Hazards in confined spaces include: Unsafe air, toxic contaminants, electrical hazards, mechanical hazards like augers and leading edge falls exposures.
- Do not enter the space under any circumstances unless trained, authorized and proper safety precautions have been taken.
- Safe confined space entries include a completed permit form, rescue equipment ready, proper ventilation and atmosphere monitoring.
- Untrained, unauthorized employees must never enter a confined space.
- NEVER enter an unsafe confined space!
- 60% of confined space fatalities include the would-be rescuer. Always have an emergency rescue plan.
- Stay alert, listen and be ready to help a coworker or perform an emergency rescue.
- Stay alert for changing conditions.
- Know how to summon emergency services.
- Remember STRATIFICATION: Some airborne gases collect (gather) at the top of spaces, some in the middle and some build at the bottom of the space. Heavier than air gases will sink, lighter-than-air gases will rise.
- Lock out and tag mechanical equipment that could activate or energize during the confined space entry.
- Protect employees from falling into the manway.
- Always make sure the gas monitor has been calibrated, and that calibration has been documented.

*These advisory materials have been developed from national standards and sources believed to be reliable, however, no guarantee is made as to the sufficiency of the information contained in the material and the Missouri Common Ground Alliance assumes no liability for its use. Advice about specific situations should be obtained from a qualified safety professional.*

