August

Safety Topic:
CONFINED SPACE

Introduction:

The term "confined space" can be used to describe a wide variety of work areas – underground utility vaults, storage containers, manholes, HVAC units, and ice resurfacer snow melt pits. Any space that is large enough to enter but not designed for continuous occupancy falls under the category of a confined space.

Permit-required confined spaces present additional risks. According to OSHA, permit-required confined spaces include areas that:
- May contain a hazardous or potentially hazardous atmosphere
- May contain a material that could engulf an occupant
- May contain walls that converge inward or slope downward into a smaller area that could trap or asphyxiate an occupant
- May contain physical hazards, such as unguarded machines or exposed live wires

Why is training necessary for permit-required confined spaces?
- Dangerous conditions within permit-required confined spaces are a leading cause of death in the workplace.

Why are confined spaces dangerous?
- Hazards are not obvious
- Ventilation is poor
- Difficult for entrant to leave or rescue workers to enter.

Entry permits save lives by:
- Identifying dangerous conditions
- Preventing accidental entry
- Describing conditions required for safe entry
- Listing procedures for emergency rescue

An attendant protects entrants by:
- Maintaining communication with entrants
- Never allowing unauthorized entrants enter a confined space
- Summoning rescue workers if an accident occurs

Entrants must evacuate confined spaces if:
- Conditions look dangerous
- You notice a change in the way you feel
- Communication with the attendant is lost
- The evacuation alarm goes off
- The attendant asks you to exit the confined space

If there is an emergency rescue situation:
Do not enter the confined space unless you are trained in emergency rescue procedures. More than half of all confined space deaths are from "would –be-rescuers."

For more information see the ASM Global Best Practice 02.02.02 Permit Req. & Confined Space Program