CONFINED SPACES POLICY (BC)

[Organization Name] is committed to protecting the health and safety of all employees that perform job duties involving confined spaces and reducing the risk of injury/illness as a result.

DEFINITION

"Confined space" means an area, other than an underground working, that:

* Is enclosed or partially enclosed
* Is not designed or intended for continuous human occupancy
* Has limited or restricted means for entry or exit that may complicate the provision of first aid, evacuation, rescue or other emergency response service
* Is large enough and so configured that a worker could enter to perform assigned work

Source: [*Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/296_97_07#:~:text=9.42%20(1)%20When%20entering%20a,a%20position%20to%20permit%20rescue.)

POLICY

This policy will summarise the steps [Organization Name] will take to ensure the health and safety of employees that perform work involving confined spaces. [Organization Name] will meet all requirements, recommendations, and guidelines established by WorkSafeBC and the British Columbia [*Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/296_97_07#:~:text=9.42%20(1)%20When%20entering%20a,a%20position%20to%20permit%20rescue.) *(Part 9-Confined Spaces).*Employer Responsibilities

* The employer will ensure that each confined space in the workplace is identified, and will

determine whether any such space requires entry by a worker, either in scheduled work activities or as a result of foreseeable system failures or other emergencies.

* If a confined space exists but no worker entry is required, the employer will ensure that each point of access to the confined space is secured against entry or identified by a sign or other effective means which indicates the hazard and the prohibition of entry by workers.
* The employer will conduct a hazard assessment for each:
* confined space, or each group of confined spaces which share similar characteristics, and
* work activity, or group of work activities which present similar hazards, to be performed inside a confined space.
* The hazard assessment will consider:
* The conditions which may exist prior to entry due to the confined space's design, location or use, or which may develop during work activity inside the space, and;
* The potential for oxygen enrichment and deficiency, flammable gas, vapour or mist, combustible dust, other hazardous atmospheres, harmful substances requiring lockout and isolation, engulfment and entrapment, and other hazardous conditions.
* Based on the hazard assessment, [Organization Name] will prepare written procedures specifying the means to eliminate or minimize all hazards likely to prevail.
* The hazard assessment and written confined space entry procedures will be prepared

by a qualified person who has adequate training and experience in the recognition, evaluation and control of confined space hazards, and in consultation with the person assigned overall responsibility for administration of the confined space entry program and with the joint H&S committee or the worker health and safety representative, as applicable.

* The employer will ensure that all confined space hazards are eliminated or minimized so that work can be performed in a safe manner.
* The employer will assign overall responsibility for administration of the confined space entry program to a person or persons adequately trained to do so.
* The employer will assign responsibility for supervision to a person who is adequately trained to supervise the job before any worker enters a confined space.
* The employer will ensure that all employees that perform work in confined spaces as part of their job duties are adequately trained as per their specific responsibilities and trained in recognizing the hazards of the space.
* The employer will ensure each point of access which is not secured against entry is identified by a sign or other effective means which indicates the hazard and prohibits entry by unauthorised workers.
* When practicable, the employer will ensure that the confined space to be entered contains clean respirable air.
* Before a worker enters a confined space, the employer will ensure that the atmosphere in the confined space is tested in accordance with the written work procedures and [section 9.26.](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-09-confined-spaces#SectionTitle:Testing_atmosphere) of the OHS Regulation.
* The employer will ensure that the pre-testing is completed not more than 20 minutes before a worker enters a confined space. Continuous monitoring and additional testing will be conducted as necessary.
* If a worker enters a confined space with a moderate or high hazard atmosphere, the employer will continuously monitor the atmosphere if a flammable or explosive atmosphere in excess of 20% of the lower explosive limit could develop.
* Pre-entry atmospheric testing is not required in a confined space with a low hazard atmosphere if: the location and control of the space ensures that a more hazardous atmosphere could not inadvertently develop, such testing is not required to verify the effectiveness of an isolation or other pre-entry control, prior representative sampling has demonstrated that the atmosphere within the space or group of similar spaces meets the low hazard atmosphere definition, or if the written entry procedures do not require such testing.
* The employer will keep a record which identifies the location of all isolation points. Every isolation point must be visually checked or otherwise verified to ensure that the confined space is effectively isolated before a worker enters the space.

Supervisor Responsibilities

* The supervisor will ensure pre-entry testing and inspection is conducted based on the written procedures.
* The supervisor will ensure that the precautions and guidelines identified in this policy, in the written procedures and the precautions required by OHS Regulation or which are otherwise necessary for the health and safety of workers are followed.
* The supervisor will ensure only authorized workers enter a confined space.
* The supervisor will ensure that workers are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment as necessary.
* When permits are required, the supervisor will complete and sign an entry permit before a worker enters a confined space with a high hazard atmosphere, that requires lockout or isolation procedures to be followed, or in which there is a hazard of entrapment or engulfment.
* The supervisor will ensure an entry permit is posted at each designated point of entry to a confined space. An entry permit must be posted at a minimum of one designated point of entry.
* The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that entry permits are updated as necessary.

Entry Permits

 An entry permit completed by the supervisor must identify the:

* confined space and the work activities to which it applies,
* workers who are inside the space or need to access the space
* required precautions for the space, and;
* time of expiration of the permit.

Once issued, the information on an entry permit may only be altered by the responsible supervisor who signed the permit to update it in the event that work conditions change. Additionally, the information on an entry permit can be altered by the standby worker who is responsible for updating the list of workers inside the confined space, or the individual responsible for testing the space to record test results.

An entry permit must be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure the ongoing safety of the workers inside the space. The permit must be re-authorized and signed by the responsible supervisor:

* if there is a change in the work crew,
* after each shift change, or
* after a change of the responsible supervisor.

Every worker affected must be informed of an alteration of an entry permit regarding a change in the required precautions or work activity. A copy of the signed entry permit must be kept for at least one year, for documentation purposes.

Confined Space Entry Program

Before a worker is required or permitted to enter a confined space, the employer will prepare and implement a written confined space entry program which includes:

* an assignment of responsibilities,
* a list of each confined space or group of similar spaces and a hazard assessment of those spaces, and
* written safe work procedures for entry into and work in the confined space, that address, where applicable:
* identification and entry permits,
* lockout and isolation,
* verification and testing,
* cleaning, purging, venting or inerting,
* ventilation,
* standby persons,
* rescues,
* lifelines, harnesses and lifting equipment,
* personal protective equipment and other precautions, and;
* coordination of work activities.