CONFINED SPACES POLICY

<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.

DEFINITIONS

“Confined space” means an enclosed or partially enclosed space that (a) except for the purpose of performing work, is not primarily designed or intended for human occupancy; and (b) has restricted means of access or egress.

“Hazardous confined space” means a confined space that is or may become hazardous to a worker who enters or is in the space due to (a)the design, construction or atmosphere of the space; (b) materials or substances in the space; (c) the work activities or processes in the space; or (d) any other conditions within or related to the space.

Source: [2022 Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation](https://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/pdf/whs_workplace_safety_act_and_regs.pdf)

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 [2022 Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation](https://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/pdf/whs_workplace_safety_act_and_regs.pdf) (*Part 15-Confined Spaces).*Safe Work Procedures

An employer must:

* Develop and implement safe work procedures for working in confined spaces and hazardous confined spaces;
* Train workers in the safe work procedures; and
* Ensure that workers comply with the safe work procedures.

The safe work procedures must include:

* Procedures for recognizing the risks associated with working in confined spaces and hazardous confined spaces;
* Procedures for isolating — including blanking, disconnecting, interrupting and locking out — pipes, lines and sources of energy from such spaces;
* Safety and personal protective equipment to be used.

The safe work procedures must include the following additional requirements when workers are working in a hazardous confined space:

* Procedures for communicating with a standby worker;
* An emergency response plan and rescue procedures to be implemented in the event of an accident or other emergency in the space;
* Information about the entry permit system.

Employer Responsibilities

Before requiring or permitting a worker to enter or work in a confined space or a hazardous confined space, an employer must:

* Identify and assess the risks to health and safety that a worker is likely to be exposed to while in the space;
* Identify and take measures to reduce, control or eliminate the risks to safety or health associated with the space, including:
* using alternative means of performing the work to be done that will not require the worker to enter the space,
* making alterations to the physical characteristics of the space that may be necessary to ensure safe access to and egress from all accessible parts of the space.
* Identify the appropriate type and frequency of tests and inspections necessary to determine the likelihood of a worker being exposed to any of the identified risks, and ensure those tests and inspections are completed by a competent person;
* Identify the safety and personal protective equipment required to be used or worn in the space by a worker while they perform work and ensure that equipment is provided and available at the worksite;
* Ensure that the structural integrity of a confined space or a hazardous confined space is maintained when its physical characteristics are altered in order to ensure safe access and egress by a worker;
* Take all steps reasonably practicable to prevent any person, other than a worker who is required or permitted to do so, from entering a confined space or a hazardous confined space;
* Ensure that the worker entering the space wears a full body harness attached to a lifeline that is attached to a personal hoisting device, unless an alternate safe method of access and egress is provided from all accessible parts of the space;
* Identify and take measures to ensure that a worker will not be exposed to the risk of drowning or becoming engulfed or entrapped in any liquid or free-flowing solid that may be present in the space;
* Identify and take measures to ensure that all energy sources that present a hazard to a worker entering, occupying or leaving the space have been locked out, and the energy sources have been put in a zero energy state;
* Identify emergency and personal protective equipment required by a worker who undertakes rescue operations in the event of an accident or other emergency within the space and ensure that equipment is at the site of the space;
* Ensure that in the event of an accident or other emergency at a hazardous confined space, there is an emergency response plan and rescue procedures that has been established and ready for implementation;
* Establish and implement an entry permit system for the space, in accordance with section 15.6 of the Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation.

Entry Permit System Requirements

The following are features of an entry permit system that must be established by the employer for a confined or hazardous confined space

* Ensure that an entry permit containing the following information is completed and signed by a competent person before a worker enters the space:
* The location of the space,
* The name of each worker who will enter the space and the reason for their entry,
* The date and time during which the permit is valid,
* Specify the work being done in the space,
* The safe work procedures for entering, being in and leaving the space,
* All hazards to the safety and health of a worker identified by the risk assessment carried out by the employer.
* An employer must ensure that a copy of the completed and signed entry permit is readily available at the site of the hazardous confined space.
* An employer must review and revise an entry permit when:
* A work activity in a hazardous confined space changes;
* Circumstances at the workplace or in the hazardous confined space change in a way that poses a risk to the safety or health of a worker;
* Any of the workers or information listed in the permit changes.

An employer must ensure that a worker who may be affected by a change to an entry permit or a work activity in a hazardous confined space is informed of the change.

Standby Workers

The employer must ensure that a standby worker is designated for every hazardous confined space; and the standby worker remains present at the entrance to a hazardous confined space at all times while a worker is in the space.

The employer must ensure that a worker designated as a standby worker is:

* Qualified as a first aider;
* Trained in hazardous confined space work procedures, entry permit system requirements and emergency and rescue procedures;
* Has a suitable system to summon assistance if necessary; and
* Is able to directly communicate with the worker in the hazardous confined space at all times.

Purging and Ventilating Unsafe Atmosphere

In any of the following circumstances, the employer must ensure that a hazardous confined space is purged, ventilated or both before a worker is required or permitted to enter it:

* Where there is or may be a concentration of a flammable or explosive substance present at more than 10% of its lower explosive limit, the space must be purged, ventilated or both so that the concentration is reduced to less than 10%;
* Where there is or may be an oxygen deficiency — oxygen content less than 19.5% by volume - or oxygen enrichment - oxygen content greater than 23% by volume - the space must be purged, ventilated or both so that the oxygen content is at least 19.5% but not more than 23%;
* Where there is or may be a chemical or biological substance that creates a risk to the safety or health of the worker, the space must be purged, ventilated or both to eliminate or reduce the risk associated with the substance, to the extent possible.

When a worker occupies a hazardous confined space that has an atmosphere that may create a risk to the safety or health of a worker, the employer must ensure:

* The space is continuously ventilated to maintain a safe atmosphere;
* The atmosphere is continuously monitored by a competent person;
* An employer must not require or permit a worker to enter a hazardous confined space if the oxygen content level in the space is above 23%;
* An employer must not require or permit a worker, other than a firefighter responding to an emergency, to enter a hazardous confined space if a concentration of a flammable or explosive substance in the space cannot be reduced to less than 10% of its lower explosive limit.