



**HAZARD
ALERT** →

Confined Spaces

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Confined spaces can be deceiving

Confined spaces are deceiving and often appear to be harmless. Danger signs (such as dead animals, rusting walls, odors) are often not apparent and the space may have been entered before without incident. Never assume that conditions have not changed and that the space is safe for entry at all times. A study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health found that 79 percent of confined space fatalities resulted from atmospheric hazards (oxygen deficient, toxic or flammable) and 21 percent from physical hazards.

Many workplaces contain spaces which are considered

"confined" because their configurations hinder the activities of any employees who must enter, work in, and exit them. For example, employees who work in process vessels generally must squeeze in and out through narrow openings and perform their tasks while cramped or contorted. For the purposes of this rulemaking, OSHA is using the term "confined space" to describe such spaces.

In addition, there are many instances where employees who work in confined spaces

face increased risk of exposure to serious hazards. In some cases, confinement itself poses entrapment hazards. In other cases, confined space work keeps employees

closer to hazards, such as high pressure Electrical or the moving parts of a mixer, than they would be otherwise.



Florida Utility Workers Die

In January this year, three underground [utility workers in Florida died](#) after losing consciousness in a drainage hole due to a buildup of hydrogen sulfide and methane. They entered the confined

space without proper per-

