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REVISED TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DESIGN OF ENTRY INTO CONFINED SPACES



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SUMMARY

In 2015, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) amended the Design Criteria for Domestic Waste Water Systems (30 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 217 Subpart M, Rule 217.33) to require municipal waste treatment facilities to comply with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) requirements for confined space entry.

DIRECT IMPACT

The new requirements create greater protection for employees from electrical, mechanical, atmospheric and physical hazards by increasing visibility, minimizing risk and allowing greater control of entry. In 2017, confined spaces caused more than 670 fatalities in the United States, with 45 of those affecting Texas families.

HIGHLIGHTS

- To the extent practical, the entry design must avoid creating confined spaces, as defined in 29 Code of Federal Regulations §1910.146.
- A ventilating manhole must be equipped with a connection for a portable ventilator to provide fresh breathing air for workers inside the space.
- Entry into a confined space must be procedurally conducted according to the requirements of 29 Code of Federal Regulations §1910.146.
- All spaces should be assessed initially for applicability and hazardous conditions, and a safe entry and rescue procedure shall be written and implemented prior to beginning entry operations.

