

Confined Spaces: Never Go In After Someone

About 10 minutes to deliver

More than half the people who die in confined spaces went in to help someone else. Why the attendant never enters.

More than half the people who die in confined spaces are would-be rescuers. Somebody goes down, a workmate climbs in after them, and there are two victims instead of one. Everything about how these spaces are managed is built around stopping that.

WHAT MAKES A SPACE DANGEROUS

A confined space is big enough to get into, has limited entry or exit, and is not designed for continuous occupancy — tanks, vaults, manholes, pits, silos, sewers, crawlspaces.

It becomes a permit-required space if it also has a hazardous atmosphere, a material that could engulf you, an inward-sloping or tapering shape, or any other serious hazard.

The atmosphere is what usually kills. It is invisible, it gives no warning, and low oxygen can put you down in one or two breaths. You cannot smell oxygen deficiency. You cannot hold your breath through it.

BEFORE ANYONE ENTERS

- Permit, signed, posted, listing hazards and controls.
- Test the atmosphere before entry and continuously during it — oxygen, flammables, then toxics, in that order.
- Ventilate, and keep ventilating.
- Isolate every line and energy source feeding the space.
- Rescue arranged before entry, not summoned after.

THE THREE ROLES

- The entrant goes in, stays in contact, and gets out immediately if anything changes, an alarm sounds, or the attendant says so.
- The attendant stays outside. Always. They monitor conditions, keep count of who is in, keep unauthorised people out, and summon rescue.
- The entry supervisor authorises it, verifies the controls are in place, and terminates entry when the job is done or conditions change.

IF SOMEONE GOES DOWN

Do not enter. Call rescue, use the retrieval line, keep everyone else out. That instruction feels wrong when it is your workmate on the floor of a tank, which is exactly why it is agreed in advance rather than decided in the moment.

ASK THE CREW

- Is there a space on this site that people go into that has never been assessed?
- Who is the attendant today, and do they understand they never go in?
- If somebody went down in there right now, who is coming, and how long would they be?

29 CFR 1910.146 • 29 CFR 1926.1203

This is a toolbox talk, not a course. It is general awareness on one topic — not site-specific, not a hazard assessment, and not a substitute for assessment of your workplace by a competent person, your written programs, or manufacturers' instructions. It does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. Regulations change; verify against the current standard. Whoever delivers it is responsible for deciding it is suitable and sufficient for the work. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, not a substitute for professional medical care or certified emergency-response training, and it confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. Migna Safety Solutions • training.mignasafetysolutions.com

v2026-09-08 • <https://training.mignasafetysolutions.com/toolbox-talks/confined-space-never-go-in-after>

ATTENDANCE RECORD

Confined Spaces: Never Go In After Someone

About 10 minutes to deliver · 29 CFR 1910.146 · 29 CFR 1926.1203

Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			

I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

Form supplied by Migna Safety Solutions · v2026-09-08 · <https://training.mignasafety.com/toolbox-talks/confined-space-never-go-in-after>

Keep this sheet with your training records. This form is supplied blank by Migna Safety Solutions — we did not deliver this session, were not present, and make no representation about what was said or who attended. A toolbox talk is general awareness on one topic and does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. The employer remains responsible for site-specific hazard assessment and for the training its workers are required to have. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, and confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. training.mignasafety.com