

SESLHD PROCEDURE COVER SHEET



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

NAME OF DOCUMENT	Confined Spaces Management
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EXECUTIVE SPONSOR	Director, People and Culture
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POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DOCUMENT	Director, People and Culture
FUNCTIONAL GROUP(S)	Workplace Health and Safety
KEY TERMS	Confined Space, Confined Spaces; Permit to Work; Critical risk.
SUMMARY	To instruct managers and workers on how to manage the risks associated with confined spaces.

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

To provide facilities managers, engineering/maintenance managers and workers with guidance on how to manage the risk associated with confined spaces that are within the organisation's control.

2. BACKGROUND

This procedure outlines SESLHD's approach for implementing the National Code of Practice (COP) Confined Spaces. The COP may be a useful resource if more detailed information regarding Confined Spaces is required. It is a standard practice to use external contractors for working in confined spaces.

This procedure incorporates:

- Determining competent persons
- Identifying confined spaces
- A Confined Spaces Register
- Completion of Risk Assessments
- Completion of Safe Work Method Statement
- Issuing of Confined Spaces Entry Permit
- Developing and implementing Risk Controls
- Developing and implementing Emergency Procedures.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Senior Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring Health Safety and Wellbeing procedures are established to meet WHS policy objectives.
- Providing adequate financial and other resources to implement this procedure.
- Demonstrating due diligence to implement and monitor this procedure.

3.3 Engineering/Maintenance Managers are responsible for implementing and complying with Health Safety and Wellbeing procedures, and ensuring:

- Consultation with workers who are involved in carrying out work in or near a confined space during the process of identifying hazards, assessing risks and implementing control measures
- Emergency procedures including first aid and communication systems are in place prior to work commencing in or around the confined space
- A confined space register is established for the facility and is up to date
- All confined spaces are adequately signposted
- Confined Spaces Entry Permits are documented
- Risk assessments, Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) and emergency plans are completed before issuing an entry permit

- All workers who conduct work in confined spaces are provided with training from a Registered Training Organization (RTO)
- Refresher training is provided to workers every two years. Records of all training provided to workers in relation to confined space work are kept in accordance with requirements documented in the WHS record keeping matrix
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided for confined space work, first aid or emergency rescue is maintained in good working order
- Where possible work in and around Confined Spaces is undertaken by a certified contractor.

3.4 Relevant Workers will comply with Health Safety and Wellbeing procedures and ensure that before entering a confined space:

- An entry permit, a risk assessment, a SWMS and its listed controls are in place
- They comply with the agreed entry permit/SWMS and follow all safety instructions
- They have completed Nationally Recognised Training for working in confined spaces to be a competent person within the last two years
- They are aware of local arrangements for first aid and emergency procedures.

3.5 Other Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU):

- Prior to the commencement of work, provide the engineering/maintenance manager with evidence that they have completed the Nationally Recognised Training for working in confined spaces, including enter and work in a confined space, work in accordance with an issued work permit, conduct hazard analysis, gas test atmospheres. Where relevant also demonstrate evidence of training in fire attack, fire-fighting equipment, performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation, operating breathing apparatus, and undertaking confined space rescue.
- Provide a copy of work specific risk assessment, safe work methods and emergency plan to the engineering/maintenance manager prior to entry to a confined space.
- They do not enter a confined space, until an entry permit and its listed controls is in place.
- On completion of work, ensure any confined space entrance is tidy, clean, locked and the key is returned to the engineering service/maintenance service.
- All personal protective equipment that is required for conducting work and that could be used in emergency situations are on site and available before entering into confined spaces.

4. DEFINITIONS (key terms from Code of Practice Confined Spaces)

Confined Space: an enclosed or partially enclosed space that:

- Is not designed or intended primarily to be occupied by a person; and

- Is designed or intended to have, a person in it when at normal atmospheric pressure while any person is in the space; and
- Is or is likely to be a risk to health and safety from:
 - an atmosphere that does not have a safe oxygen level, or
 - contaminants, including airborne gases, vapours and dusts, that may cause injury from fire or explosion, or
 - harmful concentrations of any airborne contaminants, or
 - engulfment

Entry to a confined space means: a person's head or upper body is in the confined space or within the boundary of the confined space.

Competent Person: a person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience the knowledge and skills to carry out the task.

Lower Exposure Limit (LEL): in relation to a flammable gas, vapour or mist, means the concentration of the gas, vapour or mist in air below which the propagation of a flame does not occur on contact with an ignition source.

Relevant Workers: means a worker who could enter or work in a confined space, or other workers who are not required to enter the confined space but could carry out related functions or emergency procedures. The supervisors of these workers are also relevant workers.

5. PROCEDURE

The process steps:

- Determining competent persons
- Identifying confined spaces
- A Confined Spaces Register
- Completion of Risk Assessments
- Completion of Safe Work Method Statement
- Issuing of Confined Spaces Entry Permit
- Developing and implementing Risk Controls
- Developing and implementing Emergency Procedures.

5.1 Competent persons

All workers with work activities related to confined spaces are trained to be a competent person and deemed competent to perform those activities. The training is delivered by an RTO accredited trainer in the specific units of competency and includes: Enter and work in a confined space; Work in accordance with an issued work permit; Conduct hazard analysis; Gas test atmospheres; Demonstrate fire attack fire-fighting equipment; Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation; Operate breathing apparatus, and Undertake confined space rescue.

Engineering manager and maintenance manager must complete the following additional units of competency: Issue work permit; and Observe permit work.

5.2 Identifying confined spaces

Based on the definition of a confined space, the engineering manager/maintenance manager ensures all confined spaces are identified by engaging an external qualified provider. Confined spaces are determined by the hazards associated with the task or location, not only because work is performed in a small space.

To assist with identifying confined spaces, see the list below of common work areas that may meet the definition of confined spaces based on known risks:

Vats, tanks, pits, pipes, ducts, flues, chimneys, silos, containers, pressure vessels, underground sewers, wet or dry wells, shafts, trenches, tunnels or other similar enclosed or partially enclosed structures.

Refer to: [SafeWork NSW Code of Practice - Confined Spaces](#) on how to determine if an area is a confined space.

5.3 A Confined Spaces Register

It is the responsibility of the Engineering/Maintenance Manager to establish and maintain a confined space register. The register must include the following requirements:

- Identification and location of all confined spaces at the facility
- A risk assessment on each type of confined space to assess potential hazards that workers may be exposed to when entering, and the appropriate controls
- Documentation of all control measures in the most appropriate format for each facility. An action plan format which includes all relevant control measures such as personal protective equipment inspections is appropriate
- Emergency procedures for each confined space.

The Engineering/Maintenance Manager is responsible for reviewing the register at least every five years and updating it as required with any addition, alteration, removal or change of environment, change to legislative requirements or as recommended by an external qualified provider. The register must be accessible to workers at the site.

5.4 Completing of Risk Assessments

The Engineering/Maintenance Manager is responsible for risk assessment to be conducted by a competent person, of all identified Confined Spaces

The risk assessment is completed for a specific job to be conducted, prior to commence work in or near a confined space.

Risk assessments are kept for 28 days, or if a notifiable incident occurs in connection with the work to which the assessment relates, for two years after the incident occurs.

5.5 Completing of Safe Work Method Statement

The Engineering/Maintenance Manager is responsible for a Safe Work Method Statement to be completed by a competent person for identified confined spaces prior to work commencing in or around the confined space.

A copy of the Safe Work Method Statement must be retained for the duration of the work. If a notifiable incident occurs, the Safe Work Method Statement must be kept for at least two years from the date of the notifiable incident.

5.5 Issuing of Confined Spaces Entry Permit

Before workers can enter a confined space, an entry permit must be issued for the confined space and can only be issued by the Engineering /Maintenance Manager or an appropriate Assistant Engineer. The entry permit records the communication and consultation between site management, supervisors and those carrying out the work. The entry permit also records the agreed risk controls and safety instruction and all persons listed on the permit for entry are made aware of the risk controls by their manager or supervisor before commencing the work.

5.5.1 Rules to issuing Entry permit

- Only issued by Engineering/Maintenance Manager or an appropriate Assistant Engineer.
- Must be issued for each entry into the confined space.
- Each permit only applies to one confined space and allows one or more competent workers (see section 5.1) to enter that space.
- The permit must be kept for at least one month after the work has been completed, or if a notifiable incident occurs, for 30 years after the confined space work to which the permit relates is completed.

5.6 Developing and implementing Risk Controls

There are a range of risk controls that can be implemented to reduce the risk to workers and others in relation to confined spaces. When conducting Risk Assessments and completing Confined Spaces Entry Permits, refer to the [SafeWork NSW Code of Practice - Confined Spaces](#) to help identify appropriate controls for the identified risks.

Some risk controls are mandatory and must be implemented including:

- Entry Permits (issued by Engineering/Maintenance manager or appropriate Assistant Engineer).
- Isolation / lock out (all potentially hazardous services isolated prior to any person entering the confined space).
- Continuous monitoring of safe atmosphere/safe oxygen level (airborne contaminants below their exposure standard, flammable gas or vapour is below 5% of its Lower Exposure Limit).

- Safe Work Method Statements which document the entry and exit procedures, work tasks involved, hazards and control measures relating to the tasks and emergency procedures.
- Signs and barricades (to restrict access to unauthorized persons).

5.6.1 Information, instruction and training

All competent persons must undertake appropriate National Recognised training. Refer to 5.1 Competent persons.

5.6.2 Maintenance and inspection of personal protective equipment

The personal protective equipment (PPE) should be maintained as per manufacture's instruction guideline. The PPE is inspected prior to use and scheduled inspections conducted in accordance with manufacture's instruction guideline. Records of the inspections must be maintained at least as long as the equipment is in service.

5.7 Developing and implementing Emergency Procedures

Emergency and communication procedures are in place as part of the conditions of issuing a Confined Space Entry Permit and/or a SWMS. The emergency procedures need to be completed each time a Confined Space Entry Permit or SWMS is issued.

The Engineering/Maintenance Manager or Assistant Engineer is responsible to ensure that workers are consulted with regard to the Confined Space Emergency Procedures and the template is used to record the emergency plan for the specific task and entry unless this is already documented in the contractor's SWMS.

6. DOCUMENTATION

- [Confined Space Entry Permit](#)
- [Safe Work Method Statement](#)
- [Health, Safety and Wellbeing Risk Assessment Template](#)

7. AUDIT

Compliance with this procedure will be audited every two years, through the Health Safety and Wellbeing WHS audit plan.

8. REFERENCES

External

- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 \(NSW\)](#)
- [SafeWork NSW Code of Practice - Confined Spaces \(December 2022\)](#)
- [SafeWork NSW Code of Practice - Construction work \(August 2019\)](#)

NSW Health

- [NSW Health Policy Directive PD2018_013 - Work Health and Safety: Better Practice Procedures](#)
- [NSW Health Policy Directive PD2023_010 - Work Health and Safety Audits](#)

9. VERSION AND APPROVAL HISTORY

Date	Version	Version and approval notes
Jan 2013	1	Updated by Peter Kuszelyk to reflect new WHS Act, Regulations and Code of Practice.
Sept 2013	2	Revised by Peter Kuszelyk
Oct 2013	2	Approved by DET
Aug 2017	3	Desktop Revision and Links Update - John Parkinson, WHS Consultant
Dec 2017	3	Processed by Executive Services prior to publishing
April 2018	4	Document title changed – Catherine Johnson, WHS Consultant
June 2020	5	Updated by Jen Hartley and Pao-Chi Huang to reflect the current practice in line with WHS Act, Regulations, Code of Practice and MoH WHS audit.
22 August 2024	6.0	Major review by Vee-Lyn Tan & Clayton Tubb in line with WHS legislations, Codes of Practice and MoH Audits. Risk rating reduced to low risk and development of Confined Space Entry Permit form. Approved at the SESELHD Executive Meeting.