PAYmasters

Confined Spaces in Construction: Entry/Exit Preparations

Handout

Overview

It takes hours of practice to perform an entry/exit procedure properly, but the hours are worth it if it saves even one person.

The construction regulations say that before you are required to enter into confined or enclosed spaces you must be instructed: (1) as to the nature of the hazards you might run into, (2) what you have to do to protect yourself from those hazards, and (3) how to use the protective and emergency equipment required.

You must also comply with any specifics of the job you are doing, i.e. welding, excavation work, etc., that apply to work in dangerous or potentially dangerous areas.

Prepare and use company entry/exit checklists with the following information. Checklists should be tailored to each entry situation.

Pre-entry Checklists

Training—Are all employees involved in entry trained?

Potential hazards—What hazards can be identified about a particular space, and what can you do to control or eliminate them? Examples are engulfment, toxic gases and oxygen deficiency.

Control of atmospheric and engulfment hazards—What methods will be used to control or eliminate actual or potential hazards. Some examples are lockout/tagout and ventilation.

Surrounding area surveillance—The surrounding area must be surveyed and secured.

Atmospheric testing—What will be done to evaluate the hazards of the space and verify that acceptable entry conditions for entry exist.

Entry—If there are no physical hazards, and if the pre-entry tests show there is no dangerous air contamination and/or oxygen deficiency, and there is no reason to believe that any is likely to develop, entry into and work within may

proceed. Continuous air monitoring should be done and workers must immediately leave the space when any of the monitor alarms sound.

Rescue—Your company must have procedures for summoning rescue and emergency services, for rescuing entrants from confined spaces, for providing necessary emergency services to rescued employees, and for preventing unauthorized personnel from attempting a rescue.

Exit procedures

Emergency exit—is accomplished when: an order to evacuate is given by the attendant or the entry supervisor, the entrant recognizes any warning sign of exposure to a dangerous situation, the entrant detects a prohibited condition, or an evacuation alarm is sounded.

Normal end of job exit—includes securing and putting up signs prohibiting unauthorized entry.