

# Augusta University

## Policy Library

# Confined Space Entry Policy

**Policy Manager: Environmental Health and Safety Division**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

All Augusta University employees, contractors, and agents must follow the process and procedures set forth below in order to ensure the protection of personnel from the hazards of entry into permit-required confined spaces and to ensure that regulatory requirements regarding entry into confined spaces are met.

### **AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS**

*Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:*

- Alumni     Faculty     Graduate Students     Health Professional Students  
 Staff     Undergraduate Students     Vendors/Contractors     Visitors  
 Other:

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Acceptable Entry Conditions:** The conditions that must exist in a permit space to allow entry and to ensure that employees involved with a permit-required confined space entry can safely enter into and work within the space.

**Attendant:** an individual stationed outside one or more permit spaces who monitors the authorized entrants and who performs all attendant's duties assigned in the employer's permit space program.

**Authorized Entrant:** an employee who is authorized by the employer to enter a permit space.

**Confined Space:** a space that:

- Is large enough and so configured that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned work; and
- Has limited or restricted means for entry or exit (for example, tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, and pits are spaces that may have limited means of entry.); and
- Is not designed for continuous employee occupancy.

**Emergency:** any occurrence (including any failure of hazard control or monitoring equipment) or event internal or external to the permit space that could endanger entrants.

**Engulfment:** the surrounding and effective capture of a person by a liquid or finely divided (flowable) solid substance that can be aspirated to cause death by filling or plugging the respiratory system or that can exert enough force on the body to cause death by strangulation, constriction, or crushing.

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**Entry:** the action by which a person passes through an opening into a permit-required confined space. Entry includes ensuing work activities in that space and is considered to have occurred as soon as any part of the entrant's body breaks the plane of an opening into the space.

**Entry Permit:** the written or printed document that is provided by the employer to allow and control entry into a permit space and that contains the information specified in paragraph (f) of this section.

**Entry Supervisor:** the person (such as the employer, foreman, or crew chief) responsible for determining if acceptable entry conditions are present at a permit space where entry is planned, for authorizing entry and overseeing entry operations, and for terminating entry as required by this section.

**Hazardous Atmosphere:** an atmosphere that may expose employees to the risk of death, incapacitation, impairment of ability to self-rescue (that is, escape unaided from a permit space), injury, or acute illness from one or more of the following causes:

- Flammable gas, vapor, or mist in excess of 10 percent of its lower flammable limit (LFL);
- Airborne combustible dust at a concentration that meets or exceeds its LFL;
- Atmospheric oxygen concentration below 19.5 percent or above 23.5 percent;
- Atmospheric concentration of any substance for which a dose or a permissible exposure limit is published in Subpart G, Occupational Health and Environmental Control, or in Subpart Z, Toxic and Hazardous Substances, of this Part and which could result in employee exposure in excess of its dose or permissible exposure limit;
- Any other atmospheric condition that is immediately dangerous to life or health.

**Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH):** any condition that poses an immediate or delayed threat to life or that would cause irreversible adverse health effects or that would interfere with an individual's ability to escape unaided from a permit space.

**Interting:** the displacement of the atmosphere in a permit space by a noncombustible gas (such as nitrogen) to such an extent that the resulting atmosphere is noncombustible.

**Isolation:** the process by which a permit space is removed from service and completely protected against the release of energy and material into the space by such means as: blanking or blinding; misaligning or removing sections of lines, pipes, or ducts; a double block and bleed system; lockout or tagout of all sources of energy; or blocking or disconnecting all mechanical linkages.

**Non-permit Confined Space:** a confined space that does not contain or, with respect to atmospheric hazards, have the potential to contain any hazard capable of causing death or serious physical harm.

**Oxygen Deficient Atmosphere:** an atmosphere containing less than 19.5 percent oxygen by volume.

**Oxygen Enriched Atmosphere:** an atmosphere containing more than 23.5 percent oxygen by volume.

**Permit-required Confined Space (Permit Space):** means a confined space that has one or more of the following characteristics:

- Contains or has a potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere;
- Contains a material that has the potential for engulfing an entrant;
- Has an internal configuration such that an entrant could be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or by a floor which slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross-section; or
- Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazard.
- Examples of confined spaces include vessels, tanks, manholes, pits, bins, restricted areas, rail/tank cars, ducts, sewers, sumps, column skirts, excavations, noise enclosures, etc. This list is not all-inclusive.

**Permit-required Confined Space Program (Permit Space Program):** means the employer's overall program for controlling, and, where appropriate, for protecting employees from, permit space hazards and for regulating employee entry into permit spaces.

**Permit System:** the employer's written procedure for preparing and issuing permits for entry and for returning the permit space to service following termination of entry.

**Prohibited condition:** any condition in a permit space that is not allowed by the permit during the period when entry is authorized.

## PROCESS & PROCEDURES

### General

Each organizational element requiring access to a permit-required confined space must develop and implement a confined space procedure. The procedure will be reviewed and approved by the Associate Vice President of the Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Division, prior to implementation. Any changes to an approved procedure will also require the review and approval of the Associate Vice President of EH&S, prior to implementation. At a minimum, procedures will include provisions for personnel training, hazard assessment, personal protective equipment, emergency procedures, and permitting.

Further, it is the policy of this institution that all contract personnel who may require entry into permit-required confined spaces adhere to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines for confined space entry. Individuals who contract on behalf of Augusta University will ensure that such a requirement is placed in the contract for services.

Responsibilities:

Managers/Supervisors of Facilities Operations

- No “permit-required confined spaces” have been identified on this campus that cannot be brought into the “non-permit required confined spaces” category with the proper precautions being taken. Please refer to Facilities Operations Confined Space Entry policy prior to entry into a non-permit confined space.
- If a permit-required confined space is identified, develop a confined space procedure for entry into the permit-required confined space. Submit the confined space procedure to the Associate Vice President of EH&S, for approval prior to implementation.

Associate Vice President of Environmental Health and Safety Division

- Provide technical guidance on confined space entry procedures.
- Review and approve submitted confined space entry procedures.

Contracting Personnel:

- Ensure that all contracts for services requiring entry into permit-required confined spaces specify that the contractor adhere to OSHA guidelines for confined space entry.

**REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

OSHA standard for permit-required confined spaces (general industry):

[http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_table=standards&p\\_id=9797](http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=standards&p_id=9797)

Confined space hazards are addressed in specific standards for the construction industry:

[http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owasrch.search\\_form?p\\_doc\\_type=STANDARDS&p\\_toc\\_level=1&p\\_keyvalue=Construction](http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owasrch.search_form?p_doc_type=STANDARDS&p_toc_level=1&p_keyvalue=Construction)

**RELATED POLICIES**

Facilities Operations Confined Space Entry Policy

**APPROVED BY:**

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 3/22/2021

President, Augusta University

Date: 3/22/2021