

# UTCA Safety Committee



## CONFINED SPACE ENTRY- DON'T BE A DEAD HERO



You're standing at the top of an open manhole acting as an attendant for a team of maintenance personnel who have entered a permit-required confined space. It's been several minutes since you talked to the crew, but you can peer down into the space and see them. During your last few checks with them, everything was A-OK.

This time, however, when you call down to check on them, there's no response. You look inside the hole and you notice they're slumped over or leaning up against the wall like they are taking a nap.

You call for help, but it will be minutes before a rescue team arrives.

Those are your friends down there, and they need your help. They're close to the top—so close you almost could just reach down and pull them up. Your pulse is beating; you're breathing hard from excitement. You're yelling at the workers, trying to rouse them. Something has to be done . . . so . . . you climb down into the hole.

The rescue team arrives and pulls you out first. The record will show that you attempted to rescue your friends and gave your life doing so. Some would say you were a hero. Yes, but a dead one!

The moral of this scenario is that when you are an attendant watching over a confined space, your duty is to observe and assist from above. If you have the proper rescue tripod, you can winch the victim to the surface. At no time do you enter the space to attempt rescue.

**NEVER abandon your duties as attendant and enter a confined space – not even to attempt rescue on your own.**

You have no idea what the hazards are that overcame your co-workers. And like the scenario described above, you might wind up as a DEAD HERO. Confined spaces can be killers. Know the risks and take appropriate measures to control them. Here's a list to get you started. There will be others, depending upon the type of confined space .

- Complete each step of the confined space entry work instruction.
- Thoughtfully prepare a JSA. Think: what's different today?
- Be sure air samples are taken before entry, and as frequently as required by the activities being conducted.
- Provide ventilation into the space if required.
- Use all personal protective equipment in accordance with the manufacturers' directions and a retrieval system when feasible.
- Ensure LOTO measures are in place, and permits are approved.
- Know the rescue plan before it is needed.



Follow the guidance in the Safety Regulations/Procedure.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Attended By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SOME DATA FROM TOOLBOXTOPICS.COM; PHOTO - LEHIGH.EDU; GRAPHIC - SAFETY SMART & ATA (Aerospace Testing Alliance)

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