

# Confined Space Basics

Week Number 27 (July 2 - 8) 2017 Edition

## **OBJECTIVES**

*Upon completion of this safety talk, participants will be able to:*

- *Be familiar with what crew members should expect from the entry attendant*
- *Be familiar with their responsibilities as an entry attendant*

When you're working in or around confined spaces one of your most important pieces of safety equipment is the entry supervisor or attendant. And just like any other piece of your safety equipment that you rely on, you have to trust and listen to the attendant. Having a responsible attendant watching out for you can be what keeps you alive. When you're working in a confined space, some things to remember about the entry attendant:

- They should stay in contact with the crew working inside; although, this doesn't mean a running conversation. The attendant should listen for and to the normal work sounds and periodically check in by asking questions like "How are you doing in there" or "What is your oxygen level now?"
- If the attendant must leave the entry post and there is no replacement, the entire crew must exit the confined space.
- You don't have the authority to dismiss an attendant. If the permit requires an entry attendant, not having one violates the permit and no crew can be in the confined space. Although the crew may feel they are safe in the space without the attendant, the attendant can not leave until they've been replaced.

If you're charged with being the attendant, some of the duties you'll be responsible for include:

- Although being an attendant may not be the most interesting task on the jobsite, it's important to stay as focused as possible. Becoming involved in a conversation, reading the newspaper or listening to music are distractions that must be avoided.
- Never enter the confined space unless a replacement is in place. When you do enter the space, you must observe all entry cautions in the permit, like PPE for example. Even "poking your head in" is considered entering.
- You must be familiar with the confined entry permit before you allow the crew to enter. Everyone stays out until you understand the permit.
- Be sure communication equipment is in working order at the beginning of your shift and periodically tested. Be sure both the crew and your supervisor or first responder can hear you.
- Stay in contact with the crew.
- You're there to GET help, not necessarily provide it. Your communication system is in place to alert first responders that help is needed. Rushing into an emergency situation in a confined space will probably cause you to be yet another person that needs rescuing.
- You should test any extraction equipment that is available for use at the confined space. Before using the extraction equipment always call for help.

Entry attendants are crucial to the safety of the crew working in a confined space. The responsibilities of the attendant must be clear to everyone involved; the attendant and all crew members.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- The attendant offers to make the lunch run before the crew leaves the space to save time; do you let him go?
- You're feeling light-headed in the confined space. What should you do?
- What are the major responsibilities of the entry attendant?
- The permit requires extraction equipment for each crew member. When the 3-man crew shows up; there are only two (2) sets of extraction equipment; what do you do?