

CONFINED SPACE – SAFETY PRACTICE

OVERVIEW

This procedure outlines the requirements for identifying, assessing and controlling the risks associated with confined space work undertaken by Perkins Builders.

It applies to all employees, contractors and other persons involved in confined space work and is intended to ensure confined space entry is only undertaken where necessary and is planned, authorised and carried out safely.

This procedure complies with the Work Health and Safety Act 2020, the Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 (Part 4.3 – Confined Spaces) and AS 2865 *Safe Working in a Confined Space*.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Management	Provide resources and support to ensure confined space work is planned and undertaken in accordance with legislative requirements and this procedure.
HSEQ Team	Provide guidance on confined space requirements, assist with risk assessments, monitor compliance, and maintain associated systems and documentation.
Site Manager / Supervisor	Identify confined space work, ensure appropriate risk assessments, permits and controls are in place, verify workers are competent, and supervise confined space activities.
Workers	Comply with this procedure, participate in required training, follow permit and risk assessment requirements, use provided control measures and PPE, and report hazards, incidents or unsafe conditions.
Subcontractors	Ensure their workers are competent, comply with Perkins Builders' confined space requirements, and provide any required licences, training and documentation before commencing work.

1. GENERAL

Guidance:

Confined spaces shall be eliminated where possible. Otherwise, the need for access into the confined space shall be limited.

Where access into the confined space is necessary, appropriate controls shall be in place such as that the risk associated with entry into and performance of work within the confined space is minimised as far as is reasonably practicable.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF CONFINED SPACES

Guidance:

All confined spaces which personnel may need to enter will be identified by the Site Manager / HSE Team.

The HSE Team and Site Manager will use the [Confined Space Hazard Identification Matrix \(Form 950\)](#) to identify potential confined spaces and evaluate the levels of risk involved. No one is to enter a confined space area in order to complete form 950.

3. CONFINED SPACE RISK ASSESSMENT

Guidance:

A review will be conducted of all confined spaces identified on the [Confined Space Hazard Identification Matrix \(Form 950\)](#) on each site to determine whether the need to enter them can be eliminated altogether or alternatively, the frequency may be reduced.

All reasonable efforts will be made to eliminate any unnecessary entry into confined spaces.

All confined spaces identified from the [Confined Space Hazard Identification Matrix \(Form 950\)](#) will have a confined space risk assessment completed by the HSE Team and Site Manager and those who complete confined space entry.

Outcomes of the confined space risk assessment will be made available in a documented format to the Site Manager who will supervise entries into confined space.

4. WARNING SIGNS

Guidance:

All entry points into all confined spaces shall be sign-posted with a danger sign forbidding entry to unauthorised personnel.

Appropriate signage shall be affixed to the entrance of all confined spaces. The sign shall indicate:



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"Danger. Confined Space. No Entry Without A Confined Space Permit".

5. RESPONSIBILITY FOR APPROVING AND CONTROLLING ENTRY INTO AND WORK WITHIN A CONFINED SPACE.

Guidance:

Access into a confined space shall be controlled and no access shall be permitted unless an emergency as defined in AS/NZS 2865 Safe Working in a Confined Space.

All confined space entries will be conducted in accordance with AS/NZS 2865.

A Confined Space Entry Permit (Form 928 / Hammertech) must be completed and authorised by the Site Manager before any work is carried out.

The responsibility for approving and controlling entry into and work within a confined space, in compliance with these procedures, resides with the Site Manager.

A person working within a confined space shall not be exposed to airborne contaminants that exceed exposure standards.

6. ATMOSPHERE IN THE CONFINED SPACE

Guidance:

Before any person enters a confined space, the confined space concentration of oxygen and flammable gases must be determined and meet the requirements in accordance with AS/NZS 2865 Safe Working in a Confined Space.

The confined space atmosphere shall have,

- A safe level of oxygen, between 19.5% and 23.5%.
- Airborne contaminants that may cause impairment, loss of consciousness or asphyxiation reduced to below the relevant exposure standards.
- A concentration of flammable airborne contaminants below 5% LEL.

Where flammable airborne contaminants are present in the atmosphere the following will apply;

- No entry into the confined space is permitted where the concentration of flammable airborne contaminants in the atmosphere is equal to or more than 5% LEL, or an oxygen concentration exceeding 23.5%.
- If the concentration of flammable airborne contaminants has exceeded 5% LEL after persons have entered the confined space, but is less than 10% LEL, the persons will be removed unless adequate continuous monitoring is implemented at all times while persons are present.
- No persons will remain in the confined space if the concentration of flammable airborne contaminants in the atmosphere of the confined space is equal to or more than 10% LEL.

Verify presence of safe work atmosphere. Test all areas of a confined space.

- Top, Middle, Bottom.
- Methane is lighter than air.
- Carbon Monoxide is the same as air.
- Hydrogen Sulphide is heavier than air.
- Remember Oxygen Deficiency.

7. MECHANICAL VENTILATION

Guidance:

Pure oxygen or gas mixtures with oxygen concentration of greater than 21% shall not be used for purging or ventilation of a confined space.

Where the atmosphere of a confined space does not meet the confined space entry requirements mechanical ventilation from a fresh air source can be considered.

Mechanical ventilation is the first option to correct atmospheric conditions. Operators must be aware of hazards to be corrected in the confined space.

Mechanical ventilation, air intake must be taken from a safe location to draw fresh air. Always ensure a reliable power supply for mechanical ventilation equipment.

Continuous ventilation is to be used whenever possible.

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Retest the confined space atmosphere before entry only when mechanical ventilation is removed.

8. RESPIRATORY PROTECTIVE DEVICES

Guidance:

If all control measures implemented cannot provide an atmosphere in the confined space with a concentration of oxygen greater than 19.5% or a concentration of airborne contaminants below the relevant exposure standards, entry into the confined space is not permitted unless they are wearing adequate supplied-air respiratory protection.

If wearing supplied-air respiratory protection personnel are to be trained in its use and provide competency of training.

Respiratory devices provided will comply with AS/NZS 1715 and AS/NZS 1716. Compliant respiratory devices shall be provided to authorised and competent employees whom require entry into a confined space to conduct their work.

9. APPROVAL AND CONTROL OF ENTRY/ EXIT TO A CONFINED SPACE

Guidance:

The Site Manager will ensure that no person enters a confined space or works within a confined space without approval by means of a permit authorised by a competent person. The approval shall be based on the following conditions having been met prior to entry into the confined space,

- The persons who are to enter the confined space and the stand-by & rescue person who is to remain outside the confined space during the entry period have appropriate physical competence and are trained persons under these procedures.
- The entry-persons have been adequately trained and are competent to enter a confined space and undertake the specific tasks (such as inspection, repair, testing, cleaning, etc.) to be undertaken in the confined space and any equipment, including personal protective equipment, is appropriate and considered as part of the risk assessment.
- A risk assessment has been conducted on the confined space and the entry-persons and the stand-by & rescue person are familiar with the risk assessment.
- Suitable isolations have been completed, including actions to prevent the accidental introduction of materials into the confined space and de-energising of potential energy in mechanical/electrical systems. Isolation Permits to be used.
- The atmosphere in the confined space has been tested and is within the atmospheric range as described in AS/NZS 2865 Safe Working in a Confined Space and appropriate respiratory protection shall be used. Air monitoring shall be conducted prior to entry to ensure safe atmospheric limits have been achieved.
- The entry-persons and the stand-by & rescue person have received a signed authority (permit) from the Site Manager.
- Signage is erected to identify confined space work is being undertaken, continuous communication established and maintained with person conducting works within the confined space; and a standby person is located outside the confined space for the duration of the works.
- Entry and exit points shall remain unobstructed.

10. CONFINED SPACE PERMIT

Guidance:

A Confined Space Entry Permit (Form 928 / Hammertech) must be in writing and issued by a competent person prior to entry into any confined space.

The Site Manager authorised to issue these certificates must be trained in confined spaces in accordance with AS/NZS 2865 Safe Working in a Confined Space.

Before issuing the permit, the issuer shall consider whether the work can be carried out without entering the confined space.

The Confined Space Entry Permit (Form 928 / Hammertech) shall specify preparations for entry such as:

- Physical isolation including the isolation of hydraulic and pneumatic systems using an Isolation Permit.
- Electrical isolation using an Isolation Permit.
- Cleaning and purging.
- Testing of the atmosphere where required.
- The use of personal protective equipment.
- Briefing of the person(s) carrying out the work and the stand-by person(s).

The work in the confined space must be carried out as specified in the permit and all the required precautions must be strictly followed.

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11. HOT WORKS PERMIT

Guidance:

No ignition source shall be introduced into a confined space where there is a risk of fire or explosion. Hot work in, or on the exterior surfaces of, a confined space shall not be commenced until, additionally, a hot work permit (Form 943 / Hammertech) is completed and approved by the Site Manager.

12. EMERGENCY RESPONSE / RESCUE PROCEDURES – CONFINED SPACE RESCUE PLAN

Guidance:

Emergency rescue procedures shall be established and maintained in the event of an emergency.

An emergency in a confined space could vary widely in degree or type and include:

- Employees are uninjured and evacuate themselves.
- Employees are injured, but still capable of evacuating themselves.
- Employees are assisted to evacuate by persons remaining outside the space.
- Entry is required in order to evacuate employees.
- Entry is required to provide medical treatment.

In the event of an emergency within a confined space, the natural reaction of the standby person to instantaneously enter and attempt a rescue is very dangerous and should not be attempted.

Suitable emergency response and first aid procedures, provisions and equipment will be planned, established, regularly rehearsed, and implemented in response to an emergency in a confined space.

In cases of emergency response involving emergency services personnel, these persons shall be made aware of the conditions in the confined space prior to entry.

Emergency response equipment specifically safety harnesses and safety lines will be used when required and comply with AS/NZS 1891.

13. GENERAL RESPONSE FOR AN EMERGENCY

Guidance:

The stand-by person shall assess the extent of the emergency and call for help from the appropriate resource:

- First Aider;
- Site Manager; or
- 000 for the Fire Brigade and Ambulance attendance.

Commence forced air ventilation to purge the confined space, if relevant. Never increase oxygen levels in the confined space.

Retrieve the injured person using lifeline or harness technique.

The stand-by person under no circumstances should attempt to enter the confined space, unless properly trained and equipped to deal with an emergency and there are other personnel outside the confined space to assist.

The confined space risk assessment checklist detailing the characteristics of the confined space contains important information to assist rescue workers.

14. TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION

Guidance:

All Confined Space entry-persons, stand-by and rescue-persons, and person authorising entry shall:

- Have successfully completed a training course in confined space safety (and an annual refresher course).
- Hold a current confined space training certificate.

Training records for Perkins Employees shall be maintained by Human Resources and Training records for subcontracted personnel shall be maintained on site by the Site Manager. All records shall be retained in accordance with Perkins [Document and Records Management Procedure \(70\)](#)

15. COMPLETION OF THE WORK

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Guidance:

At the completion of the work, the confined space shall be closed, and the permit returned to the issuer and closed.

Records of all confined space training records, risk assessments and entry permits shall be retained in accordance with Perkins [Document and Records Management Procedure \(70\)](#).

LINK TO SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- [Confined Space Hazard Identification Matrix \(Form 950\)](#)
- [Document and Records Management Procedure \(70\)](#)

REFERENCES

- Work Health and Safety Act 2020
- Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022
- AS/NZS 2865:2009 Safe Working in a Confined Space
- AS/NZS 1715:2009 Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment
- AS/NZS 1716:2012 Respiratory Protective Devices
- AS/NZS 1891 Personal equipment for work at height

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