

NRMCA Monthly Safety Initiative

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Confined Spaces... Think First-Required

Ready Mixed Concrete Plants and Confined Space

What exactly is a confined space? According to OSHA, a confined space is a space with limited entry and exit, large enough to enter and perform work, and not designed for continuous occupancy. As well, there is then a bit of a twist to this, as there is also something called a permit-required confined space. A permit-required confined space consists of all the items listed above, and contains or may contain a hazardous atmosphere, contains material that will engulf an entrant, can trap, or asphyxiate an entrant, or contains other recognized serious hazards. Confined spaces at a ready mixed concrete plant may include bins, mixer drums, silos, baghouses, pits, vaults, and tanks.



What to Know About Confined Spaces at a Ready Mixed Concrete Plant

All confined spaces must be identified and labeled. Some permit-required confined spaces may be reclassified as non-permit-required-confined-spaces if all hazards can be removed. Confined spaces shall not be entered without approval from management, without an outside attendant, until all safety procedures have been followed, and not until everyone knows and has practiced their role. Before any confined space is entered, determine the scope of work, determine all hazards, implement necessary measures to protect all employees, verify required lockout/tagout, ventilate the area, conduct atmospheric testing if required, retest if needed and monitor the atmosphere, and obtain a permit if required. As well, before entering any confined space a rescue plan should be arranged in case of an emergency. In the event of an emergency inside the confined space, the attendant shall not enter. Instead, they should initiate the rescue plan, contact help, remain ready to assess the incident, prepare for or help with extraction, and/or provide first-aid. Failure to follow these steps could result in potentially serious injury or death.

Confined Space Dos and Don'ts

- Think first, follow all confined space safety procedures
- Determine what spaces are confined spaces and label
- Don't enter a confined space without prior approval/knowledge
- Don't assume a confined space is free of hazards
- Beware of known and changing hazards inside of a confined space
- Entrants and attendants shall maintain communication
- Attendant shall not enter the confined space in an emergency
- Maintain an accurate and current permit when required
- Permit must be signed by supervisor
- Have a rescue plan before confined space entry occurs

Resources

OSHA: [Confined Spaces](#)

OSHA: [Permit-Required Confined Spaces](#)

NRMCA: [Mixer Drum Cleaning Program](#)

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