

CONFINED SPACES



A confined space is a space that 1) is large enough for an employee to enter and perform assigned work, 2) has a limited or restricted means of entry or exit, and 3) is not designed for continuous employee occupancy.

These spaces may include, but are not limited to underground vaults, tanks, storage bins, pits and diked areas, vessels and silos.

Confined spaces can be dangerous because of presence of chemical and physical hazards. For example, dangerous vapors and gases can accumulate in these spaces and fires and explosions can occur. Therefore, confined spaces that may pose a safety or health hazard require a written Confined Space Program which outlines institute procedures, including training requirements and the use of entry permits for access of these spaces. A permit-confined space is one that meets the definition of a confined space and has one or more of the following characteristics:

- Contains or has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere;
- Contains a material that has the potential for engulfing the entrant;
- Has an internal configuration that might cause an entrant to be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or by a floor that slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross section; and/or
- Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazard.

Besides the sewer and storm drain manholes, DRI has identified the following confined spaces:

- the grease trap (or clarifier)
- sewage ejection sump
- air handlers
- electrical vaults
- vendor controlled telephone, water and power vaults
- Maxey utility tunnel
- Evaporative coolers

Before conducting work in any confined spaces, the employee and/or his/her supervisor must evaluate the space to determine if a safety or health hazard may exist making it a permit required confined space. The current policy at the DRI is that **No employee may enter any permit required confined space**. Any work that needs to be conducted in permit-confined spaces must be contracted out to a company that has a confined space entry program, trained personnel and the appropriate equipment and emergency response personnel to do the job safely.

Once identified, Permit Required Confined Spaces must be labeled with the following sign:

DANGER
"PERMIT-REQUIRED
CONFINED SPACE,
DO NOT ENTER"