

Confined Space Compliance in California

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Confined Space

When looking to put into practice a Confined Space program that will be in compliance with Title 8 CCR 5157, one of the most important places to begin would be to conduct an audit and evaluation of your workplace. This is a requirement of the standard that most organizations overlook and it must be completed by the employer. Once this step is complete the next step is to utilize signage to give proper warning to all affected employees and in cases where signs cannot be utilized Cal/OSHA allows for “Other equally effective means.”

The written Confined Space program will lay out a road map for employees to follow which contains policies and procedures for Permit-Confined Space entries. The program must also include the written permit system that employees must utilize prior to entering any identified permit-required space. Other components include rescue planning and equipment to be utilized for both entry and rescue from permit-required Confined Spaces.

Training is another component of the standard which includes all affected employees in the terminology and required positions. Attendants, Entrants, and Supervisors must also be knowledgeable in what each position entails and more importantly how these respective positions work with one another to create a safer work environment for all workers involved in the operation. Rescue training is also required and must include a rescue drill annually as well as individuals being familiar with rescue options and equipment.

Cal/OSHA has provided many tools to accomplish these tasks from flow charts to appendix examples

that organizations can utilize and follow as a template in the development of their respective programs. Having a well developed program that covers all aspects necessary to protect workers that enter into permit-required Confined Spaces is really the basis and the intent of the standard.

With Cal/OSHA still making permit-required confined spaces a “special emphasis program”



inspectors are encouraged to ask an organization about their respective program when making on

site visits. Employers must be prepared to respond with a well devised program that is complete and effective in protecting employees and meeting the standard.

In review the following must take place

- Permit-Required Confined Space Audit and Evaluation
- Signage
- Written Permit-Required Confined Space Program
- Written Permits
- Training for all Affected Employees
- Provide required Equipment (Including Rescue)