Department of **Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety**

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WorkSafe Western Australia

Confined spaces safety: checklist

Scope

This checklist is a tool to assist duty holders and persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) to manage work health and safety (WHS) risks associated with work carried out in a confined space that is under their management or control. It highlights relevant considerations but does not cover all requirements set out in the:

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS Act)
- Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 (WHS General Regulations)
- Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022 (WHS Mines Regulations).

Checklist

A PCBU must ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that a worker does not enter a confined space before Division 3 of Part 4.3 of the WHS General Regulations and WHS Mines Regulations have been complied with. Elements of Division 3 are captured in this checklist.

Key terms and definitions are provided at the end of this document.

For further information, refer to the *Confined spaces: Code of practice*.

Risk assessments	
☐	A risk assessment has been conducted for the purposes of managing risks to health and safety associated with a confined space at the workplace.
☐	The risk assessment was conducted by a competent person.
☐	The risk assessment is recorded in writing.
☐	Where a review or revision of control measures[1] has occurred, a competent person has reviewed and completed any necessary revisions to the risk assessment to reflect this.

[1] In accordance with regulation 38 or regulation 618 (WHS Mines Regulations only)

In conducting the risk assessment in relation to a confined space, the following matters were considered:	
☐	whether the work could be carried out without entry to the confined space
☐	the nature of the confined space
☐	if applicable (if there is an associated hazard), any change that may occur in the concentration of oxygen or airborne contaminants in the confined space
☐	the work to be carried out in the confined space, the proposed method of working, and the range of methods by which the work can be carried out
☐	the type of emergency procedures required, including rescue procedures.
Confined space entry permits	
☐	A confined space entry permit has been completed by a competent person.
☐	No worker has been directed to enter a confined space to carry out work before a confined space entry permit has been issued[2].
☐	The PCBU will ensure that all workers leave the confined space upon completion of the work for which the permit was issued.
☐	The competent person will provide written acknowledgement when the work is completed and all persons have left the confined space.
The confined space entry permit:	
☐	is in writing
☐	specifies the confined space it relates to
☐	specifies the names of persons permitted to enter the confined space
☐	specifies the period of time during which work will be carried out in the confined space
☐	specifies the control measures that will be used to control risk associated with the proposed work in the confined space
☐	contains space for an acknowledgement that the work it relates to has been completed and all persons have left the confined space.
Control measures specified in the confined space entry permit:	
☐	are based on a risk assessment that complies with requirements set out in the previous checklist ('risk assessments')
☐	include control measures to be implemented for safe entry to the confined space
☐	include details of the system of work the PCBU provides for communication and safety monitoring.
Signage	
☐	There is signage that identifies the confined space.
☐	There is signage that informs workers that they must not enter a confined space unless they have a confined space entry permit.
☐	The signage is clear.
☐	The signage is prominently located next to each entry to the confined space.

[2] Not applicable to emergency service workers entering to rescue or provide first aid to a person at the direction of the emergency service organisation

Signs are erected and will remain in place:	
☐	while work is carried out in preparation for work in the confined space
☐	immediately before work in the confined space commence
☐	while work is being carried out in the confined space
☐	while work is being carried out for the completion of work in the confined space
System of work and specific control measures	
☐	There is adequate lighting within the confined space.
In relation to communication and safety monitoring:	
☐	a standby person is in the vicinity while work is being carried out in the confined space
☐	the standby person will monitor the conditions within the confined space
☐	where practicable, the standby person will observe the work being carried out
☐	there is a system that allows a worker in the confined space to maintain continuous communication with a worker outside the space.
Control measures have been implemented so far as is reasonably practicable to:	
☐	eliminate or minimise any risk associated with the introduction of any substance or condition from or by any plant or services connected to the confined space
☐	eliminate or minimise any risk associated with activation or energising in any way of any plant or services connected to the confined space.
In relation to atmosphere:	
☐	airborne contaminant levels are tested prior to entry and monitored if there is uncertainty regarding the airborne concentration of a substance or mixture that may pose risks to health and safety, and to which an exposure standard applies
☐	test equipment is of an approved type and has recently been calibrated and checked for correct operation
☐	purging or ventilation of any contaminant in the atmosphere of the confined space is carried out, so far as reasonably practicable, using gas mixtures with <21% oxygen concentration by volume
☐	the atmosphere of the confined space has a safe oxygen level while work is being carried out in the space or
☐	if this is not reasonably practicable, and if the oxygen level in the atmosphere in the confined space is <19.5% by volume — workers carrying out work in the space are provided with air supplied respiratory equipment.
In relation to flammable gases, vapours, fire and explosion:	
☐	the concentration of any flammable gas, vapour or mist in the atmosphere of the space is maintained at <5% of its lower explosive limit (LEL) while work is being carried out in the confined space or
☐	if the concentration is ≥5% but <10% of its LEL — a suitably calibrated, continuous-monitoring flammable gas detector is used in the space.
☐	an ignition source will not be introduced into the confined space (from outside or within the space) if there is a possibility it will cause a fire or explosion in the space.
In relation to ventilation:	
☐	when gas tests are carried out from outside of the confined space, readings are not taken until ventilation has been stopped for at least ten minutes
☐	effective ventilation is maintained continuously while the enclosed space is occupied.

Emergency procedures and equipment	
☐	There are established first aid procedures and rescue procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency in a confined space.
☐	First aid procedures are practised as necessary to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
☐	First aid and rescue procedures can be initiated from outside the confined space.
☐	Entry and exit openings of the confined space are large enough to allow emergency access.
☐	Entry and exit openings of the confined space are free of obstructions.
☐	Plant, equipment and personal protective equipment provided for first aid or emergency rescue are maintained in good working order.
Workers who may enter a confined space to carry out first aid or rescue procedures in an emergency are provided with suitable, appropriately maintained and effective:	
☐	air supplied respiratory equipment (where required to enter a confined space with actual or potential unsafe oxygen levels or harmful concentrations of airborne contaminants)
☐	PPE for emergencies involving an engulfment in the confined space, or a serious risk of engulfment while a worker is in a confined space.
Information, training and instruction	
Information, training and instruction in relation to confined spaces includes:	
☐	the nature of all hazards relating to a confined space
☐	the need for, and the appropriate use of, control measures to control risks to health and safety associated with those hazards
☐	the selection, fit, use, wearing, testing, storage and maintenance of relevant personal protective equipment
☐	the contents of any confined space entry permit that may be issued in relation to work carried out by the worker in a confined space
☐	emergency procedures.
Information, training and instruction covering the above topics is provided to the following workers (i.e. 'relevant workers'):	
☐	workers who, in carrying out work for the business or undertaking, could enter or work in a confined space
☐	workers who carry out functions in relation to work in a confined space, but are not required to enter the space
☐	workers who carry out functions in relation to emergency procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency in a confined space, but are not required to enter the space
☐	workers who supervise the above workers.
Record keeping	
☐	A record of training provided to relevant workers is kept for 2 years.
A copy of any risk assessment prepared in relation to WHS risks associated with a confined space at the workplace is kept:	
☐	for at least 28 days after the relevant work has been completed
☐	for at least 2 years after the incident if a notifiable incident occurs in connection with work in a confined space.
A copy of any confined space entry permit is kept:	
☐	at least until the relevant work has been completed
☐	for at least 2 years after a notifiable incident in connection with work in a confined space.

Copies of risk assessments and permits kept in accordance with the WHS General Regulations or WHS Mines Regulations are:	
☐	available for inspection under the WHS Act
☐	made available to any relevant worker upon request.
Air monitoring results are recorded, and:	
☐	kept for 30 years after the date the record is made
☐	readily available to persons at the workplace who may be exposed to the substance or mixture.

Key terms and definitions

Confined space: means an enclosed or partially enclosed space that is not designed or intended primarily to be occupied by a person and is, or is designed or intended to be, at normal atmospheric pressure while any person is in the space and is or is likely to be a risk to health and safety from any of the following:

- an atmosphere that does not have a safe oxygen level
- contaminants including airborne gases, vapours and dusts that may cause injury from fire or explosion
- harmful concentrations of any airborne contaminants
- engulfment.

It does not include a space in which excavation work is carried out in an underground mine.

Confined space entry permit: means a confined space entry permit issued under regulation 67 of the WHS General Regulations or WHS Mines Regulations.

Entry: by a person into a confined space means the person's head or upper body is in the confined space or within the boundary of the confined space.

Lower explosive limit (LEL): means the concentration of the gas, vapour or mist in air below which the propagation of a flame does not occur on contact with an ignition source.

Purging: means the method used to displace any contaminant from a confined space.

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