



Permit- Required Confined Spaced Entry Communications

[29 CFR 1910.146]

A **Confined Space** is a space that is:

- 1) Large enough and shaped so that an employee can enter and perform work; and
- 2) Has limited or restricted means of entry or exit; and
- 3) Is **NOT** designed for continuous human occupancy.

A **Permit-Required Confined Space** is a space that meets the above definition of a confined space; and has one or more of the following:

- a) contains or *has the potential* to contain a hazardous atmosphere;
- b) contains a material that has the potential to engulf the entrant;
- c) is configured that an entrant could become trapped or asphyxiated;
- d) contains any other recognized safety or health hazard.

*For more information on Occupational Safety and Health issues, please visit our website:
www.csealocal1000.org/osh.php*



Employers must provide an effective means of both internal and external communications for permit-required confined space entries.

Employers are required to develop and implement communications procedures, and practices necessary for safe permit space entry operations.

The written program and the entry permit must include:

- The communication procedures used by authorized entrants and attendants to maintain contact during the entry.
- The rescue and emergency services that can be summoned and the means (such as the equipment to use and the numbers to call) for summoning those services.

Make sure external communications are properly working. If 911 is the appropriate means of summoning rescue services, and a cell phone is the only means of external communication, make sure it connects to the proper dispatch service.

The employer shall ensure that all authorized entrants communicate with the attendant as necessary to enable the attendant to monitor entrant status and to enable the attendant to alert entrants of the need to evacuate the space.

The employer shall ensure that all authorized attendants communicate with authorized entrants as necessary to monitor entrant status and to alert entrants of the need to evacuate the space.

Be sure to have a communications plan in place BEFORE you get to the space.

Visual signals, voice, two-way radios or walkie -talkies, and rope systems are some examples of what may be used. Equipment selection should be based upon the noise level, configuration and potential hazards of the space.

Tips for using communication devices:

- ➔ **Make sure the battery life is full, or replacement batteries are available onsite.**
- ➔ **Test to see if there is interference or dead spots within a space.**
- ➔ **Make sure any device entering a space is intrinsically safe if there is a potential for a hazardous atmosphere.**

When using visual, voice or rope systems be sure to have a system worked out in advance that all members of the entry team understand.

Ropes are the least effective means of communication and should only be used as a last resort. The OATH system is a common method used for rope communication. Keep in mind that it may be difficult for an entrant to tug for times during an emergency situation.

- O =Okay.** One tug on rope indicates the entrant is ok.
- A=Advancing.** Two tugs indicate that the entrant is advancing and needs rope fed into the space.
- T=Take up.** Three tugs indicate that the entrant is retreating and needs the rope taken up.
- H=Help.** Four tugs indicate that the entrant needs help.