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# Confined Spaces for Construction

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### Course description

In 2015, when the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) decided to create a separate confined spaces standard for the construction industry, officials said they hoped to save 780 lives every year. With the development of the rule, the administration recognized that construction is a unique industry with its own unique challenges. It's recommend that all construction employees participate in the full training on confined spaces for general industry. This course is essential for construction because it points out the differences between the two standards. However, you'll still need to view these other courses to ensure full compliance.

### Construction standard

- OSHA recognizes that the construction industry sometimes involves complicated organizational structures.
- One project might involve multiple employers, contractors, and subcontractors.
- The confined spaces standard for construction is tailored to suit the realities of how construction sites evolve as work is completed.
- If you're building a new structure or upgrading an existing structure, then you must observe the construction confined spaces rule.

### Five construction requirements

1. There must be a controlling contractor assigned to coordinate the activities of different employers at the construction site.
  - All information about confined and permit-required confined spaces flows through the controlling contractor.
  - This is intended to protect workers from hazards introduced by different teams who might be unaware of the work going on in a nearby confined space.
  - Every team at the site must inform the controlling contractor about any confined spaces.
  - They are required to continuously provide updates regarding work progress.
  - It's the controlling contractor's job to ensure that other employers on the construction site don't create hazards near or in confined spaces.
2. A "competent person" must identify confined spaces and permit-required confined spaces.
  - This person will receive special training in evaluating the work site and writing permits.
  - OSHA requires that every employer working at a permit-required construction site have a written confined space program which affords proper training for all workers and outlines all the required protocols.
  - The competent person will be involved in the writing and implementation of this written program.

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### Five construction requirements (cont.)

3. It's essential that there be continuous monitoring of atmospheric conditions inside confined spaces, if at all possible.
  - This monitoring must be effective at identifying any serious changes in the quality of air.
4. The construction confined spaces standard requires special attention to any potential engulfment hazards.
  - Usually, this means naming an attendant responsible for keeping watch.
  - This person must not leave the work site at all unless another trained attendant is available.
5. A permit can be suspended instead of canceled on a construction site if the entry conditions listed on the permit change or if there's an adverse event that requires evacuation.
  - Re-entry is then allowed when the conditions inside are once again deemed safe, as detailed on the permit.
  - The general industry standard dictates that, if an incident occurs, the permit must be canceled and a new permit has to be written.

### Important rules

- Employers must limit risk for workers who could be exposed to hazards.
  - This can be accomplished by either eliminating the hazards or restricting access by using lockout or tagout methods.
- Employers must identify and document an emergency response plan.
  - Part of this plan includes checking with local first responders to determine if they're trained to handle confined spaces evacuation.
  - If they are, construction employers should document any times when this team is unavailable.
  - The emergency response plan should include an equally well-trained alternative.
  - If no alternative is available, the employer must dictate that any work within confined spaces is off-limits until rescue crews are once again available to respond to a crisis.

# Application Questions

1

**Name two differences between OSHA's general standard for confined spaces and the construction standard for confined spaces.**

2

**Briefly describe your workplace's emergency response plan.**