

- 1023 Health Hazards Associated With Work in Confined Spaces. M. Kleinfeld and B. Feiner.
J. Occ. Med. 8, 358-364 (July, 1966).

In 21 accidents during work in confined spaces, a total of 46 workers was affected. Negligence was the primary cause of death or injury. In each situation virtually no safety precautions were followed and no trained personnel were available to administer first aid immediately after the accidents occurred. Furthermore, in nearly all instances the accidents occurred in connection with the performance of maintenance and other special activities rather than in the course of routine operations. Safeguards for work in confined spaces were outlined under three broad categories: (1) testing and preparation of the confined space before entry; (2) use of precautionary measures during occupancy; and (3) assurance of the availability of prompt rescue and adequate first aid should an accident occur. In general, these safeguards can be enforced readily in large plants where they may be incorporated into existing safety programs, if they are not already part of them. However, application of these safeguards in small factories is not easy. Such establishments in which most of the reported accidents occurred, do not usually have adequate safety programs or supervisory personnel with clearly defined safety responsibilities. As a result, the necessary safeguards are not available to provide protection during confined space operations. The conspicuous absence of safeguards in small establishments is due primarily to ignorance of the potential hazards inherent in work in confined spaces. The cases discussed demonstrated the need for a vigorous educational effort, particularly in small plants, to minimize deaths and injuries due to work in confined spaces.

-- Authors' summary

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