

INTERNAL ONLY
ISLHD PROCEDURE
COVER SHEET



Health
Illawarra Shoalhaven
Local Health District

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| FUNCTIONAL GROUP OR HUB | Work Health and Safety |
| NSQHS STANDARD | Standard One |
| SUMMARY | To instruct managers and workers on how to manage the risks associated with confined spaces. |

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY

Feedback about this document can be sent to
Corporate Policies: ISLHD-CorporateGovernance@health.nsw.gov.au

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) has an obligation under the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2011 to, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult with workers who carry out work for the ISLHD and who are, or are likely to be, working within a confined space.

ISLHD will consult, cooperate and coordinate activities with other duty holders, such as contractors and subcontractors, to eliminate or minimise risks associated with confined spaces, so far as is reasonably practicable.

This procedure outlines the safety precautions that are to be undertaken, and the management of workers that may be exposed to risks associated with confined spaces in the workplace.

2. BACKGROUND

This procedure outlines the way ISLHD will manage the risks associated with confined spaces in the workplace.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Employees must:

- Ensure that they do not enter a confined space, until an entry permit and its listed controls are in place.
- That they comply with the agreed entry permit and follow all safety instructions.
- They are aware of local arrangements for first aid and emergency procedures before commencing work in and around a confined space.

3.2 Line Managers must:

- Consult with workers who are involved in carrying out work in or near a confined space during the process of identifying hazards, assessing risks and implementing control measures.
- Ensure emergency procedures including first aid and communication systems are in place prior to work commencing in or around the confined space.
- Ensure safety equipment including lock out devices are available.
- Ensure workers have instruction in the Confined Space Entry Permit, including the agreed controls.

3.3 General Managers/ Service Directors must:

- Ensure a confined space register is in place for the facility/site.
- Ensure all confined spaces on the register have restricted access and warning signage fitted.

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- Ensure risk assessments of confined spaces are conducted by a competent person.

3.4 Chief Executive must:

- Ensure a process is in place to develop and implement the Confined Space Management Procedure.
- Ensure resources, time, money, and technologies are available to support the Confined Space Management Procedure.
- Ensure training for Confined Space Management is provided to workers.

3.5 Contractors to ISLHD:

- Must ensure their workers comply with the requirements for access to confined spaces and do not enter a confined space without receiving a Confined Space Entry Permit signed by a competent person (refer to Management of Work Permits [ISLHD CORP PROC 43](#)).

Along with the normal arrangements for issuing a Confined Space Entry Permit, Contractors are required to meet the additional requirements outlined below:

- Provide evidence of appropriate confined space training prior to workers being listed on the work permit either as a standby person or a person authorised to enter a confined space.
- Consult with ISLHD managers and workers regarding access to Confined Spaces.
- Ensure that their emergency procedures have been planned in consultation with ISLHD and clearly outlined in the Confined Space Entry Permit.

4. DEFINITIONS

Confined Space: an enclosed or partially enclosed space that:

- is not designed or intended to be occupied by a person;
- 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:
 - an atmosphere that does not have a safe oxygen level, or
 - contaminants, including airborne gases, vapours and dusts, that may cause injury from fire or explosion, or
 - harmful concentrations of any airborne contaminants, or
 - engulfment

Competent Person: a person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience, the knowledge and skills to carry out the task

Lower Exposure Limit (LEL): in relation to a flammable gas, vapour or mist, 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.

5. PROCEDURE

The general steps:

- Determining competent persons
- Identifying confined spaces
- Develop a Confined Spaces Register
- Completion of Risk Assessments
- Issuing of Confined Space Entry Permit
- Developing and implementing Risk Controls
- Developing and implementing Emergency Procedures

5.1 Determining Competent Persons

ISLDH Facility Managers will need to identify who will be the competent persons in regards to entry of a confined space; this may be an external contractor.

If it is an ISLHD worker and if they require training, this is to be arranged through their department manager with assistance from a Workforce Support – Safety Advisor.

Training should be chosen for the level of tasks the worker will be required to perform:

1. Confined Space Enter and Work – 1 day course
2. Confined Space Gas test / Permit Issuer – 2 day Course
3. Confined Space Standby/Rescuer - 3 day course.

A Refresher course for the relevant tasks must be undertaken each 2 years to maintain competency.

If it is an external contractor, they will be required to provide evidence of training and relevant competency prior to issuing a Confined Space Entry Permit.

5.2 Identifying confined Spaces

Based on the definition of a confined space, the Facility Manager is to ensure all confined spaces are identified. A confined space is determined by the structure and a specific set of circumstances. The same structure may or may not be a confined space depending on the circumstances when the space is entered. Entry to a confined space is considered to have occurred when a person's head or upper body enters the space.

A space may become a confined space if work that is to be carried out in the space would generate harmful concentrations of airborne contaminants.

ISLHD will arrange an external contractor (e.g.: Greencap) to identify the confined spaces that are on ISLHD sites.

5.3 Developing a confined spaces register

The Facility Manager is to ensure all identified confined spaces within their control are recorded on a confined space register, this register is completed by an external contractor that has been engaged by ISLHD to identify confined spaces. The external contractor must ensure that a competent person develops the register.

5.4 Risk Assessments

A single (or generic) risk assessment must be carried out for a class of confined spaces in a number of different work areas or workplaces where the confined spaces are the same. This will only be appropriate if all of the hazards being covered are the same. A risk assessment must be carried out on individual confined spaces if there is any likelihood that a worker may be exposed to greater, additional or different risks.

The external contractor will provide risk assessments on the identified confined spaces, and these are included in the confined space register. The risk assessments must be available to any worker that intends to enter an identified confined space. The risk assessment must be reviewed and revised whenever any risks change based on the specific task that may be performed in the confined space.

5.5 Issuing of Confined Spaces Entry Permit

Before workers can enter a confined space, an Entry Permit (ISLHD OPS F269 – Confined Space Permit) must be issued for the confined space and can only be signed by a competent person. The permit will record the communication and consultation between site management, supervisors and those carrying out the work. All persons listed on the permit must be made aware of the permits risk controls by their manager or supervisor before commencing the work.

The risk assessment / entry permit must be kept for 28 days, or if a notifiable incident occurs in connection with the work to which the assessment relates, for 2 years after the incident occurs.

5.6 Information, instruction and training

- Facility Managers must ensure their workers have training so they understand:
 - The hazards associated with working in the confined space,
 - The information provided through the confined space entry permit.
- Training is to be provided to all workers involved with confined spaces, including those:
 - entering or working in confined spaces,
 - undertaking risk assessments and issuing entry permits,
 - monitoring conditions, acting as a standby person or communicating with workers in a confined space,
 - purchasing equipment or involved in the design/layout of a confined space.

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5.7 Developing and Implementing Emergency Procedures

Emergency and communication procedures must be in place as part of the conditions of issuing a Confined Space Work Permit. The emergency procedures will need to be confirmed and updated each time a Confined Space Work Permit is issued, as there may be changes to the risk or available emergency response staff.

The Facility Manager is to ensure that workers are consulted with regard to the Confined Space Emergency Procedures.

6. DOCUMENTATION

ISLHD OPS F269 – Confined Space Permit

7 AUDIT

This procedure will be audited 2 yearly as part of the Ministry of Health WHS Audit Tool

8 REFERENCES

[Confined Spaces – Code of Practice SafeWork NSW](#)
[WHS Act 2011 – NSW](#)
[WHS Regulations 2017 - NSW](#)
[Work Health Safety – Better Practice Procedures PD2018_13](#)

9 REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY

| Date | Revision No. | Author and Approval |
|--------------|---------------------|---|
| October 2019 | 0 | Safety Coordinator Review of Safety Management System Approval/Date: Corporate Policy Recommendation committee/ January 2020 Approval/Date: Executive Director Strategic Improvement Programs / January 2020 |