

Confined Spaces



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What is a confined space? WAC 296-307-642

WAC 296-307-642 applies to all confined spaces and provides requirements to protect employees from the hazards of entering and working in confined spaces.



Note: Don't forget to add this to your Accident Prevention Plan. As per WAC 296-307-030 At least once a month, you must conduct a walk-around safety inspection of active job sites, the materials and equipment involved, and operating procedures.

This part of the WAC applies in any of the following circumstances:

- You have confined spaces in your workplace.
- Your employees will enter another employer's confined spaces.
- A contractor will enter your confined spaces.

What is a confined space?

A space that is **ALL** of the following:

- Large enough and arranged so an employee could fully enter the space and work.
- Has limited or restricted entry or exit.

Use this google form to look around your farm and determine if you have any confined spaces. [Are there confined spaces on my farm?](#)

Identifying where your confined spaces are will help you provide appropriate safety training that is specific to your farm.

Remember a confined space is not primarily designed for human occupancy.

To learn more about the hazards of these confined spaces visit:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/confined-spaces/confined-spaces-agriculture/dairy-farm>

DAIRY SAFETY TOOLKIT

Examples:



To learn more visit: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-rules/chapter-pdfs/WAC296-307.PDF>

Confined Spaces: Permit vs. Non-permit

A permit-required confined space or permit space is a confined space that is capable of causing death or serious physical harm. A nonpermit confined space is a confined space that does NOT contain actual hazards or potential hazards capable of causing death or serious physical harm.



Use this [google form](#) to find out if your farm has a [Permit- Required](#) confined space.

OR use the following checklist:

A **permit-required** confined space or permit space is a confined space that has one or more of the following characteristics capable of causing death or serious physical harm:

- Contains or has a potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere (can't be in the atmosphere without clean air to breath)- Check on it.
- Contains a material with the potential for engulfing someone who enters the space. (grains other examples)
- Has an internal configuration that could allow someone entering to be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or by a floor, which slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross-section. - picture
- Contains any physical hazard. This includes any recognized health or safety hazards - including engulfment in solid or liquid material, electrical shock, or moving parts. Picture or diagrams
- Contains any other recognized safety or health hazard that could either:
 - Impair the ability to self-rescue, OR ♦ Result in a situation that presents an immediate danger to life or health.

If you said yes to any above, your space is defined as a **permit required space**.

Provide Employee Training

You must: Provide training to each employee involved in permit-required confined space activities, so they acquire the understanding, knowledge and skills necessary to safely perform assigned duties.



Make sure you:

- Establish employee proficiency in their confined space duties.
- Introduce new or revised procedures as necessary.

Employers can determine employee proficiency by:

- Observing employee performance during training exercises that simulate actual confined space conditions.
- A comprehensive written examination; or
- Any other method that is effective for the employer.

You must: Provide training at the following times:

- Before an employee is first assigned to duties covered by this part. – Before there is a change in an employee's assigned duties.
- When there is a permit-required confined space hazard for which the employee has not already been trained.
- If you have reason to believe that there are either:
 - ◆ Deviations from your procedures for permit-required confined space entry; or
 - ◆ Employee knowledge or use of your procedures is inadequate.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, .040, .050, and .060. 05-01-166 (Order 04-19), § 296-307-64802, filed 12/21/04, effective

Treat Manure Pits as if it was a permit required.

Make sure your required Accident Prevention Program (APP) addresses manure storage dangers and safety.

Print these posters for your farm: [Manure Storage dangers and Accident Prevention](#)



Resources

- <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/confined-spaces/confined-spaces-agriculture/dairy-farm>
- <https://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/hazardalerts/ManurePitHazardAlertEnglish.pdf>

Case Studies

Understanding the risks of working around confined spaces and other hazards can sometimes be best explained by using real life examples. Below are case studies that have led to injuries or fatalities.

The art of storytelling can be impactful and can lead to everyone on the farm taking extra precautions.

Dairy Laborer Dies when Loader Falls into Manure Pit

Summary: Laborer operating a loader drowned when the loader fell into a manure pit. When he finished his task, he drove the loader along a dirt road on the employer's property that would take him to the milking area, where he would spend the rest of his shift. On the way, he turned off the road away from his destination and traveled across a field back toward the cow pen. In the field between the road and the pen, there was an unfenced, unmarked ground level manure pit. As he was driving in a 15-foot-wide area between the pit and fence, the loader tipped over into the pit. It landed on its side, submerging the operator's cab. The victim drowned.

Dairy Worker Injured When Clothes Are Caught in Straw Spreader

Summary: A worker at a dairy farm was severely injured when his clothing was caught in the rotating beater bars of a straw spreader that he was greasing. The worker said that he had never received training in lockout/tagout procedures. When the worker had finished greasing the bearings on one part of the spreader, he started to duck under the rotating beater bars to get to the next set of bearings underneath the machine. As he bent down, the metal teeth caught hold of his loose hooded sweatshirt and pulled his head and neck into the beaters.

Dairy Farmer Dies from Crushing Injuries Sustained While Loading Cows

Dairy farmer was helping load cattle onto a trailer when he was fatally crushed between the end of a gate and a steel fence. At the time of the incident, the farmer and two other workers were attempting to load cows onto a trailer using a chute created by fencing and some portable gates. One of the cows turned and rushed back through the gate into the barn area. The workers were able to turn the cow so that it was once again going toward the trailer and had passed through a makeshift gate. Once again the cow turned, and tried to push through the gate while the victim was standing by the side wall at the open end of the gate. The victim was crushed by the gate and his heart punctured by a metal protrusion on the end of the gate. Workers on the scene called for help and initiated resuscitation efforts. The victim was pronounced dead on arrival at a nearby major trauma hospital.