



Temporary Work Areas

Info Sheet 1

To begin with, let's work with an analogy. The term "confined space" is like the word "vehicle" everyone drives one, but they all have different names. There's brand names like Ford or Chrysler, model name like Sunbird or Silverado, category name like truck or SUV; or there's the nick names like "the bomb" or "the rocket". No matter what we call it - they are a vehicle. The term indicates a mode of transportation involving tires, motor, transmission and steering wheel. Options we add to it "customize" the vehicle to our liking or our budget.

The term "confined space" is the same. Organizations around the world have silos, tanks, sewers, or crawl spaces. They could be known as Finish Mill #2 or Waste Water Tank 05. The possibilities are endless. We can easily spot vehicles because we look for specific thing, it's the same for confined spaces. The first characteristic to examine is, is it a temporary work area?

Is work being performed in the area:

- periodically during a shift (e.g. less than 50% of the time)?
- only when the regular process is not in operation?
- for a purpose other than the regularly intended operation of the area?

Another characteristic that all confined spaces have is that they are isolated. In other words are the worker(s) segregated in a way they are not visible to other workers or other people due to a barrier of either distance, time or a physical design? With the exception of outside work, workplace designers build in safeguards that ensure worker comfort and facilitate egress and emergency response.

A third characteristic would be is the space fully or partially enclosed. For something to be partially enclosed, it must have some form of walls. Key criteria of the walls would be that they enclose at least 50% of the perimeter and be greater than 1 m in height. This enables the area to trap heavy than air gases or hamper emergency response.

These characteristics would include most machine enclosures, trenches, excavations, tanks, vats, bins and other enclosures. It would however, eliminate roofs as a confined space. The point at this stage of the game is just to identify