AT THE END OF THE WORKDAY, EVERYONE GOES HOME SAFE.

Confined Space: Rescue Plan Toolbox Talk

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Permit required confined spaces are one of the more dangerous hazards found on a construction site. They can be immediately dangerous to workers' lives and health if they are not properly controlled and evaluated before entering.

Rescuers account for 60% of confined space fatalaties.

By definition, a confined space is anything that meets the following criteria: is large enough to enter; has limited means of entry and exit; and is not designed for continuous occupancy.

A critical part of performing confined space work is having a rescue plan in place in case of emergency, not only to protect the unresponsive entrant, but also the untrained or ill-equipped rescuers, who account for a shocking 60% of confined space fatalities. So what does a rescue plan look like?

Take Action:

First, make sure your rescue responders have adequate equipment for rescues.

Second, you need to make sure the responders will be able to arrive in a timely manner based on the site conditions and the hazards they will face. Things like atmospheric hazards, electrocution, flooding, engulfment, poor lighting, fall hazards, and chemical hazards all need to be taken into consideration.

Third, make sure you inform your designated responders before beginning work so they can be prepared to take action if there is an emergency.

It is also a good idea to have the responders look at some of your confined space situations ahead of time so they can fully understand what they will be dealing with. Doing a practice drill for confined space rescue with them is a great way to ensure they can accomplish the task correctly and efficiently.

Communication with your rescue team is important. However, the rescuers communicating to you when they cannot respond is just as important. You need to know if they will not be able to respond to an emergency and avoid confined space work during those times.

Real World Application:

A welder entered a confined space to figure out what needed to be done that day. After being in the confined space for some time, people began to worry, and one decided to go into the confined space to look for him.

After a couple of minutes, the that person quit responding, so a second would-be rescuer decided to enter. When he stopped responding, a third entered.

With a total of four men in the confined space not responding, the fifth finally called emergency services. They arrived, pulled the bodies out of the confined space, and began CPR. Only one of the would-be rescuers survived, while the other three lost their lives.

Situations like this are not uncommon. When someone stops responding in a confined space, the natural response is to go in after them. However, this can result in more lives lost. Even if the rescue team is called and someone enters while waiting for them to arrive, that person can still pass out and become an additional obstacle, ensuring the first victim will be trapped inside the hazardous space longer. Time in a situation like this makes all the difference between life and death.

Talking Points:

1. Who is our rescue team?
2. Who should we contact before entering a confined space?
3. What can we do to have a better relationship with our rescue team?

Date: ______________________________

Instructor Name/Signature: ______________________________

Translator Name/Signature:

Full Name (print)	Signature	Company