

## CONFINED SPACE SAFETY

A confined space is defined to be an area that (1) is large enough to enter and work, (2) has limited means for entry and exit and (3) is not designed for continuous occupancy. The unfavorable ventilation of a confined space can cause the atmosphere in the area to become life threatening.

An entry permit is required for entry into a confined space that has at least one of the following:

- Potential for hazardous atmosphere
- Potential for engulfing an entrant
- Has an internal configuration capable of trapping or asphyxiating an entrant
- Any other safety or health hazard

On average, California records six confined space deaths annually. Not only is the initial victim entrant at high risk, but 60% of the fatalities occur to would-be rescuers.

Stanford employees entering permit-required confined spaces on campus may encounter extremely hazardous atmospheric conditions and/or access difficulties that can become life threatening. Such locations include sewers, tank, boilers, crawl spaces, acid pits, vaults, storm drains, pipelines, bins, tubs, ducts and vessels which must be entered for repairs, inspection, and maintenance.

All employees who enter permit required confined spaces must receive training in confined space procedures. Training must occur before assignment to confined space operations, if there is a change in duties, if there is a new hazard present or if there are changes in entry procedures.

The cardinal rule when working in confined space is: **Never trust your senses**. Only through using appropriate monitoring instruments which are capable of analyzing gases in the parts-per-million range can employees be certain that the atmosphere is safe to enter.

For more information, please contact that the EH&S Occupational Health and Safety Program at 725-3209.