

SAFE WORKING PROCEDURE

Confined Spaces

CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY | VERSION 4.05 | March 2024

STATEMENT:

In order to comply with legislation and fulfil statutory responsibility, the Council must make sure that:

- Entry to a confined space is avoided if possible.
- A safe system of work is in place if entry to a confined space is unavoidable.
- No employee or contractor is permitted to enter a confined space unless they are competent to perform the specified task.
- A confined space permit to work may be necessary in some instances.
- Emergency arrangements are in place prior work commencement.
- The confined space has been left in a safe condition.

SCOPE:

This Safe Working Procedure (SWP) applies to:

- All managers including headteachers referred to as managers herein.
- All employees of Southampton City Council.
- All contractors working on behalf of the Council.

Version Control

This Safe Working Procedure is issued and managed by Corporate Health and Safety Service.

Version Number	Date	Amendments
Version 1.00	1998	
Version 2.00	Unknown	
Version 3.00	Aug 2004	
Version 4.00	Jun 2010	
Version 4.01	Sep 2015	New template
Version 4.02	Mar 2017	Hyperlinks update
Version 4.03	Feb 2020	Amended, Appendix 1 replaced, Appendix 2 added
Version 4.04	March 2022	Minor amendments – Periodic Review
Version 4.05	March 2024	Periodic Review
Review Conducted		Next Review Date
December 2011		December 2012
September 2015		September 2016
March 2017		March 2018
February 2020		February 2022
March 2022		March 2024
March 2024		March 2026

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Forms

- Permit to work - Confined spaces
- Risk Assessment

Forms can be found in the [Forms Library](#)

1. Responsibilities

Level 1 Managers/Head Teachers are responsible for ensuring:

- 1.1. All work activities carried out in confined spaces are risk assessed; control measures are implemented to reduce the risks to the lowest practicable level and emergency arrangements are in place.

Managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the SWP and must:

- 1.2. Have risk assessments in place for work carried out in confined spaces.
- 1.3. Provide adequate level of supervision.
- 1.4. Ensure that only fit and competent persons who have a combination of training, education, experience, acquired knowledge and skills; enter confined spaces.
- 1.5. Ensure contractors sign onto the site.
- 1.6. Monitor contractors and their activities whilst on site.
- 1.7. Issue a Permit to Work for all activities carried out in confined spaces as defined by The Confined Space Regulations 1997 (Refer to [Appendix 1](#))
- 1.8. Issue a permit to work if required for work in other confined spaces which may pose a significant risk to employees for reasons other than those defined by The Confined Space Regulations 1997
- 1.9. Ensure the confined space is left in a safe condition.
- 1.10. Ensure contractors sign off the site.

Contractors must:

- 1.11. Sign onto site and report to Site Manager.
- 1.12. Carry out work activities in accordance with risk assessments, safe systems of work/method statements and local procedures.
- 1.13. Obtain a Permit to Work for activities carried out in confined spaces
- 1.14. Ensure the working area is left in a safe condition.
- 1.15. Sign off from the site.

Employees must:

- 1.16. Undertake training necessary to carry out their duties.
- 1.17. Become familiar with the relevant risk assessments, safe systems of work and permits to work.
- 1.18. Report any shortcomings / contraventions in health and safety practice.
- 1.19. Comply with any health and safety arrangements that have been implemented.

2. Procedures

- 2.1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have provided free downloadable Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) and guidance [Safe Work in Confined Spaces](#). Responsible Persons must use this, and other information detailed below to help inform the risk assessment process and management of confined spaces in the workplace. The Pre-Entry Manager/Supervisor Checklist ([Appendix 2](#)) can also aid with this process.
- 2.2. A Permit to Work – Confined Spaces form *must* be completed prior to any work carried out in a confined space as defined by The Confined Space Regulations 1997. (Refer to [Appendix 1](#) for the definition of a confined space).
- 2.3. A workspace which does not fit the Confined Space Regulations 1997 definition criteria, but which still poses a significant Health & Safety risk will still require a Risk Assessment and agreed safe system of work to be carried out prior to work commencing. The [SWP Permit to Work](#) procedure should be followed in these instances if required.

3. Safe Working Procedures Relevant to This Document

- 3.1. Permit to Work
- 3.2. Control of Contractors – Construction and Building Maintenance
- 3.3. Control of Contractors - Service Providers and Suppliers of Goods
- 3.4. Risk Assessment
- 3.5. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
- 3.6. Safety in Excavations

Note: Other safe working procedures may apply, and the assessor should consult the SWPs.
An A-Z is available on the Council's [Health and Safety Intranet](#).
Forms can be found in [Forms Library](#).

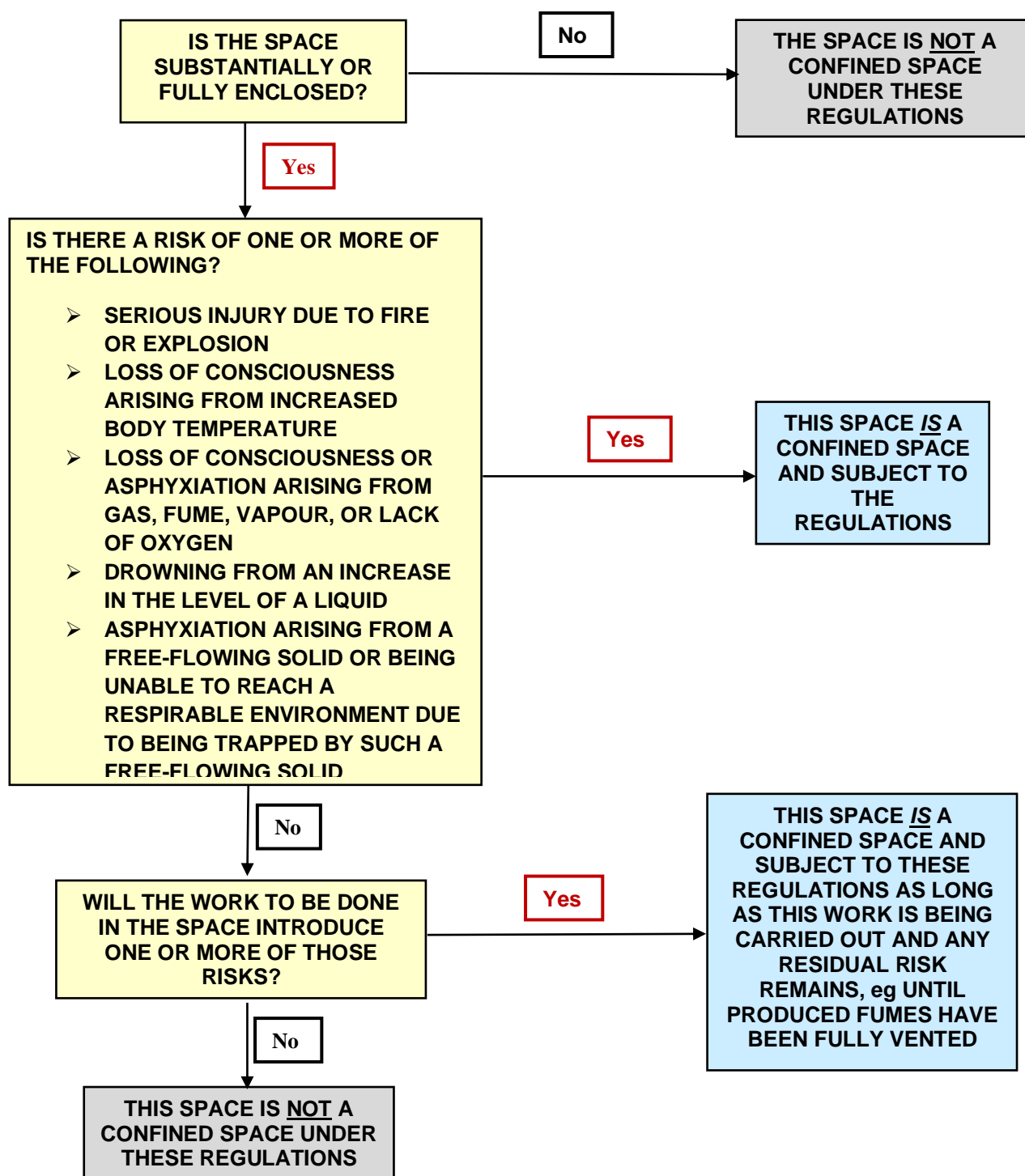
4. Main Legislation Relevant to This Document

- 4.1. [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#)
- 4.2. [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 \(As amended\)](#)
- 4.3. [The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997](#)

5. Contact Address's and Guidance Links

- 5.1. Health and Safety Executive
www.hse.gov.uk
 - 5.1.1. [Managing Steps to Risk Assessment](#)
 - 5.1.2. [Guidance on Safe Work in Confined Spaces](#)
 - 5.1.3. [Confined Spaces](#)
- 5.2. Corporate Health and Safety Service
[Health and Safety Intranet](#)
[School Health and Safety](#)

The definition of 'Confined Space' under The Confined Space Regulations 1997



A place not usually considered to be a confined space may become one if there is a change in the conditions inside or a change in the degree of enclosure or confinement, which may occur intermittently. For example, an enclosed space may be free of contaminants and have a safe level of oxygen but the work to be carried out in it may change this.

Excavations and trenches may also be classed as confined spaces and the same procedures will apply. Please refer to [SWP Safety in Evacuations](#) as well as this SWP.

Appendix 2

Confined Spaces Pre-Entry Manager/Supervisor Checklist

Division/Department:		Space/Location:	
Entry Purpose:		Date:	

Section 1 – Hazards Evaluation & Control			
Check:	Yes	No	Control (if yes)
<i>Does the space contain or potentially contain:</i>			
- A hazardous atmosphere			
- Chemicals or chemical residue			
- Pipes or services leading into the space that contain/carry fuels, chemicals, water, compressed air, steam or gas			
- Flammable/combustible or explosive materials/substances			
- Significant amounts of decomposing organic matter			
- Mechanical hazards such as rotating parts, entanglement or entrapment etc			
- Water and/or the potential for flooding			
- Materials which may trap or engulf an entrant, eg granular materials			
- Poor light levels			
- Excessive noise levels			
- Potential for slips, trips and falls			
- Converging walls, sloped or tapered floors to smaller cross-sections which could trap or asphyxiate an entrant			
- Thermal hazards – extremes of hot or cold			
Does the space contain:	Yes	No	Control (if no)
- Natural ventilation and/or a free flow of fresh air			

Section 2 – Hazards associated with the task			
Does the task involve:	Yes	No	Control (if yes)
- Use of solvents, paints or cleaning agents			
- Are there any substances used in the space which have acute hazards			
- Are there any substances used or created by processes that are oxidising agents or enrich the oxygen level within the space			
- Are there any substances used or created by processes that deplete the oxygen level within the space			
- Is cutting, welding, brazing, riveting, scraping or sanding going to be carried out in the space			
- Does the task produce dusts, fumes or hazardous by-products			
- Does the task produce the potential for an explosive atmosphere (DSEAR)			
- Does the task produce significant noise and vibration hazards to the entrant			

Section 2 – Hazards associated with the task (cont)			
Does the task involve:	Yes	No	Control (if yes)
- Use of petrol/diesel powered tools, generators or compressors			
- Presence or use of lines under pressure (compressed air or steam)			
- Presence or use of energised electrical cables and equipment in the space			
- Is the use of WAH equipment required inside the space in order to carry out the task (ladders, steps, scaffold etc)			
- Is there potential for falling objects both within the space and through entrance into the space			
- Does the task require the use of lifting equipment			
- Can the entrant be seen from the entry point throughout the duration of the task – a clear line of sight			
- Does any PPE required to undertake the task present a hazards within the space			
- Does the task necessitate more than a single entrant			