

Australian/New Zealand Standard™

Safe working in a confined space

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AS/NZS 2865:2001

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Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists
Australian Manufacturing Workers Union
Australian Maritime Safety Authority
Department of Defence, Australia
Department of Industries and Business, N.T.
Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, Tas.
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PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee SF-037, Work in Confined Spaces to supersede AS 2865 — 1995.

The Standard retains the format of the previous edition in that, depending upon jurisdictional requirements, the clauses highlighted in boxes may be used as the basis of regulations, while the remaining clauses form the minimum recommended methods of achieving a safe system of work and meeting the essential requirements. Alternative methods, if used, should provide at least an equal level of safety. It is also possible for the entire Standard to be called up in a legislative framework.

The common essential requirements are those contained in boxes. An organization which does not comply with the Standard in all respects would still be required to meet the requirements in the boxes.

The Standard was prepared to meet the need for requirements and procedures for the prevention of occupational illness, injuries and fatalities associated with persons entering and working in a confined space. It is designed not only to ensure that confined spaces are made safe for those entering them, but also to highlight the likely hazards associated with such work areas and the relevant safe work processes necessary to deal with these hazards.

The Standard emphasizes the responsibilities for safety before entry and during the entire operation. Such responsibilities cover conditions of work for an organization's own employees as well as for any contractors or other persons on the premises. This Standard requires that adequate steps be taken to eliminate or control hazards. It also requires that all persons involved in the entry of a confined space be trained and instructed on the nature of the hazards and the precautions to be followed.

The significant changes to this edition are as follows:

- (a) A small change to the definition of a confined space, clarifying the intent that oxygen level can mean either a deficiency or an excess.
- (b) The inclusion of an Appendix that provides guidance on applying the definition of a confined space.
- (c) Revision of the Appendix dealing with risk assessments, together with a suggested risk assessment form.
- (d) Revision of the written authority form in an Appendix.
- (e) The removal of phrases which restate the rights and duties of employers, employees, designers etc.

Item (e) came about as a result of the 1995 Industry Commission Inquiry into Occupational Health and Safety, which found that the restatement of rights and duties in national standards incorporated into subordinate legislation was a significant source of confusion about workplace health and safety.

Many of the clauses which form the recommendations have been altered so as to improve the clarity of the content. Better explanations of the intent of those clauses highlighted in boxes have also been made.

The terms 'normative' and 'informative' have been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which they apply. A 'normative' appendix is an integral part of a Standard, whereas an 'informative' appendix is only for information and guidance.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
1 SCOPE.....	4
2 OBJECTIVES.....	4
3 APPLICATION.....	4
4 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS.....	5
5 DEFINITIONS.....	5
6 DESIGN, MANUFACTURE, SUPPLY AND MODIFICATION.....	7
7 CONSULTATION.....	7
8 HAZARD IDENTIFICATION.....	7
9 RISK ASSESSMENT.....	9
10 CONTROL MEASURES.....	11
11 TRAINING AND COMPETENCE.....	21
12 EMERGENCY RESPONSE.....	23
13 RECORD KEEPING.....	23
APPENDICES	
A SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES FOR WORK IN A CONFINED SPACE.....	24
B LIST OF REFERENCED AND RELATED DOCUMENTS.....	26
C GUIDE TO THE CONFINED SPACES DEFINITION.....	28
D GENERAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS.....	31
E SAMPLE RISK ASSESSMENT FORM.....	33
F ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CONDUCT OF HOT WORK IN CONFINED SPACES.....	36
G ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CLEANING OF CONFINED SPACES.....	39
H SAMPLE WRITTEN AUTHORITY.....	41
I ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATMOSPHERIC TESTING AND MONITORING.....	43
J ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROVISION AND USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT.....	46

STANDARDS AUSTRALIA/STANDARDS NEW ZEALAND

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1 SCOPE

This Standard sets out the particular requirements and procedures to ensure the health and safety of any persons required to enter or work in a confined space. For the purpose of this Standard, a person whose head, i.e. the breathing zone, or upper body is within a confined space is considered to have entered the confined space.

NOTE: This is not intended to prevent a person from inserting their hand or arm while holding a test instrument or probe into a confined space as part of the evaluation prior to entry.

Requirements and procedures for ensuring general occupational health and safety, for example, welding safety and prevention of slips and falls, are dealt with in other standards and regulations rather than being specifically addressed in this Standard. It should be noted that a confined space may exacerbate other hazards, for example, noise or heat stress.

This Standard is framed to help designers, manufacturers, suppliers, modifiers and users where confined spaces are involved to achieve a high safety standard. It is not exhaustive in its coverage, but it is intended to cover those areas which are of particular concern in the workplace. It will be necessary for persons who require further information to research various other legislation, standards, codes and guidance notes.

This Standard is not intended to cover situations which are not at atmospheric pressure, such as work in hyperbaric chambers. At pressures significantly higher or lower than the normal atmospheric pressure, expert guidance should be sought.

Specific workplaces, for example, dangerous goods storage areas, may also be subject to other standards, regulations or codes of practice.

Most places of work are not confined spaces in accordance with the definitions in this Standard. Risk assessments should still be made at these places of work to ensure that people are not exposed to risk. For example, national standards and codes of practice for hazardous substances and plant provide procedures for conducting risk assessments for hazardous substances. These may include atmospheric contaminants.

NOTE: A summary of procedures for atmospheric safety during confined space entry is given in Appendix A.

2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Standard are to provide guidance to —

- (a) eliminate or minimize the need to enter confined spaces; and
- (b) provide for the health and safety of all persons who need to enter or work in confined spaces by preventing exposure to hazards which may otherwise be experienced when working in a confined space, and thereby prevent collapse, injury, illness or death arising from exposure to those hazards.

3 APPLICATION

This Standard is applicable to confined spaces as defined in Clause 5.4. The Standard does not apply to underground mining and tunnelling construction, nor does it apply to work which is carried out at other than normal atmospheric pressure.

The requirement to prepare a written risk assessment and written authority for entry may be waived only for the duration of an emergency.

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