

Australian Standard<sup>®</sup>

**Confined spaces**



This Australian Standard® was prepared by Committee SF-037, Work in Confined Spaces. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 13 August 2009. This Standard was published on 4 September 2009.

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The following are represented on Committee SF-037:

- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
  - Australian Industry Group
  - Australian Institute of Industrial Hygienists
  - Australian Manufacturing Workers Union
  - Australian Maritime Safety Authority
  - Australian Steel Institute
  - Department of Labour New Zealand
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  - Engineers Australia
  - NSW Department of Primary industries, Mineral Resources
  - NSW Mines Rescue
  - Local Government Association of Queensland
  - Safe Work Australia
  - Safety Institute of Australia
  - Water Services Association of Australia
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Standards Australia wishes to acknowledge the participation of the expert individuals that contributed to the development of this Standard through their representation on the Committee and through the public comment period.

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# Australian Standard<sup>®</sup>

## Confined spaces

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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/NZS 2865:2001, *Safe working in a confined space*. After consultation with stakeholders in both countries, Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand decided to develop this Standard as an Australian Standard rather than an Australian/New Zealand Standard.

This Standard outlines the minimum requirements for establishing a safe system for entry and the conduct of tasks in or on a confined space. These requirements are consistent with industry best practice and are considered mandatory for reducing the risks associated with confined spaces and for establishing safe entry to them. Mandatory requirements of this Standard are highlighted in bold type and contained in boxes.

The purpose of this Standard is to provide safety requirements and procedures for persons entering and conducting tasks in a confined space. It is intended to ensure that confined spaces are made safe for those entering them, and to highlight the likely hazards associated with such spaces and the relevant risk control measures necessary to deal with these hazards.

This Standard emphasizes responsibilities for safety and sets out steps that need to be taken to eliminate or control risks that may arise during confined space operations. It also requires that all persons involved in the entry of a confined space be trained, assessed as competent, and instructed on the nature of the hazards and the risk control measures to be followed.

Significant revisions in this edition of the Standard are as follows:

- (a) The criteria that constitute a confined space have been clarified in the definition.
- (b) Guidance diagrams have been provided for identifying a confined space.
- (c) Recommendations for training and competency have been introduced.

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.

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## STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

**Australian Standard  
Confined spaces**

## SECTION 1 SCOPE AND GENERAL

**1.1 SCOPE**

This Standard sets out the particular requirements and risk control measures for the safety of persons entering or conducting tasks associated with a confined space.

This Standard is intended to help designers, manufacturers, suppliers, modifiers and users of confined spaces to achieve a safety outcome. It is not exhaustive in its coverage, but it is intended to cover those areas which are of particular concern in regard to confined space safety.

NOTE: Further information may be found in legislation, Standards, Codes of Practice and guidance notes.

Requirements and controls for general occupational health and safety risks (e.g. welding safety, prevention of slips and falls) are dealt with in other Standards and regulations and are not specifically addressed in this Standard.

This Standard does not cover underground mining, tunnelling, excavation work, trenching, abrasive blasting or spray painting. In such cases, other safe systems of work apply.

This Standard is not intended to cover confined spaces that are not at atmospheric pressure. At pressures significantly higher or lower than the normal atmospheric pressure, expert guidance should be sought.

Many enclosed or partially enclosed spaces are not confined spaces in accordance with the definition in this Standard. Specific areas such as dangerous goods and hazardous substances storage areas are subject to their own legislation, Standards or Codes of Practice.

NOTE: A flow diagram for entry and conduct of tasks in a confined space is given in Appendix A.

**1.2 OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this Standard is to provide designers, manufacturers, suppliers, modifiers and users of plant equipment and services that contain confined spaces with the means to reduce the risks to health and safety of those working in or near confined spaces, by prescribing techniques and procedures covering entry to, and working in or on a confined space.

In addition, the Standard sets out to—

- (a) define the criteria for identifying a confined space;
- (b) provide guidance in recognizing the hazards associated with confined spaces;
- (c) outline the requirements for establishing a safe system for entry and the conduct of tasks in or on a confined space;
- (d) highlight the minimum requirements that are consistent with industry best practice and are considered mandatory for reducing the risks associated with confined spaces and for establishing safe entry to confined spaces; and

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