

SECTION 3(3)

CONFINED SPACES, SEWERS AND WELLS

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INTRODUCTION

All employees engaged in work bringing them into contact with sewage, must have attended a certificate course on "Entry into Confined Sewers" and be in possession of a WEILS DISEASE card which their doctor must be aware of.

- (a) The term "confined space" has a wide application throughout but it specifically includes sewers, manholes, siphons, pumping station, wet wells and digesters.
- (b) Concern relates to an entry in any space where:
 - (i) results of injury are likely to be more serious than in ordinary conditions, and;
 - (ii) where a greater risk than normal exists of a dangerous accumulation of flammable, asphyxiating or poisonous gases or vapours.
- (c) You are unlikely to be involved in an accident if you follow the correct procedures. Remember that what would be a minor accident elsewhere can be a major accident in a confined space.

BE ALERT AND PARTICULARLY OBSERVANT WHILST WORKING UNDERGROUND - LOOK FOR:

Flood Indications

- i) A movement of air through any inlet.
- ii) Rising levels of effluent.
- iii) Increase in speed of flow.
- iv) Changes in sound.

Sewer Gases and Oxygen Deficiency - Indications

- i) Detection equipment.
- ii) Personal - eye irritation sickness, dizziness, choking, lack of muscular control.
- iii) A sewer that seems safe may become dangerous as you set foot in it.

Rats

There is special risk of Weils Disease or Leptospirosis though contact with rat urine. Never rub your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands while you are in a sewer. If you cut or scratch yourself, wash, treat the cut with antiseptic cream and cover it well with a waterproof plaster as soon as you get out. If you see RATS, report their presence when you get out.

Dangerous Liquids

Liquids can be dangerous for several reasons.

- i) They may be corrosive (eg: acids).

- ii) They may be very hot.
- iii) They may give off poisonous or flammable vapours.

Equipment

Operatives entering confined spaces must be personally protected with safety equipment as supplied by the Council.

A person trained and certified as competent will assist in checking breathing sets, gas detection sets, first aid kit, resuscitator, safety and rescue lines and lifting harnesses before use.

Detection Equipment

No-one is allowed to enter the confined space without testing the atmosphere for gases. All users must be trained and certified as competent to use this equipment.

Breathing Equipment

The Emergency Escape or Saver Set capacity must be checked daily. You must be trained and certified as competent to use breathing apparatus.

Exhaust Fumes

Under no circumstances should a petrol or diesel engine be operated underground. Beware of exhaust fumes being sucked underground from vehicles or engines operating near a sewer entry.

Remember - exhaust fumes can kill.

CONFINED SPACES REGULATIONS 1997

Information being updated.