Safety NEWSLETTER

provided by
The Safety Council
of East Texas
as a service to its members

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Three workers were killed in a truck bed similar to this one when material in the bed emitted a poisonous gas while one of the workers was moving the material around with a shovel.

A Closer Look at Confined Spaces:
An Open Top Doesn't Make It Safe

We all recognize the inside of a tank or silo as a confined space deserving of special precautions. However, there are many other potentially hazardous confined spaces that appear well ventilated - but that really aren't. Consider the following:

- Three workers were killed in an open top truck bed when the materials in the bed emitted poisonous hydrogen sulfide gas while one of the workers was rearranging some of the material with a shovel. Two other people were overcome when they got into the bed to try to help the first victim. The top of the truck bed was completely open, but that did not make it safe.

- In a trench only about six feet deep, a worker was applying a primer to concrete when he was overcome by the solvent fumes of the primer. No one had tested the atmosphere prior to the start of work and no ventilation or respiratory protection was used.

OSHA describes a confined space as any space that has limited or restricted means for entry or exit, and it is not designed for continuous employee occupancy.

Over 60 percent of the fatalities involving confined space are suffered by people attempting to rescue a downed victim. Therefore, it is critical that all potential confined spaces be identified BEFORE work begins via a thorough job safety review. The job safety review should identify all hazards, specify ventilation and protective equipment requirements, ALONG WITH a detailed rescue plan.

Remember, if you can't walk in and out in any direction, and it's not a place that's continuously occupied, it could be a confined space. Use these and other guidelines as part of your regular job safety review.

ARE YOU A DEFENSIVE DRIVER?

When pursued by a tailgaiter, do you:

1. Speed up to increase the distance between you and the tailgater?
2. Increase the distance between you and the vehilcle in front of you?
3. Stop the car, get out, and confront the tailgater?

The most effective way to deail with a tailgater is to increase the distance between you and the vehilcle in front of you. This will give you extra space to stop safely and also give the tailgater space if he decides to pass.

When stopped at an intersection waiting to make a left turn, do you:

1. Turn your wheels to the left?
2. Turn your wheels to the right
3. Keep your wheels straight ahead

Keep your wheels straight ahead. This ensures that if you are hit from behind, you won't be pushed to the left and into oncoming traffic.

It's difficult to imagine a blind flange 4" thick not being thick enough for a pressure test, but in this case 4" was about 30% thinner than it needed to be. It's not enough to judge the appropriate thickness by intuition - it must be calculated. Make sure that the blind flanges you use are designed and used only for the pressures they have been rated for.

Slip, Trip, and Fall are Four Letter Words!