

# CONFINED SPACE MANAGEMENT ON THE FARM

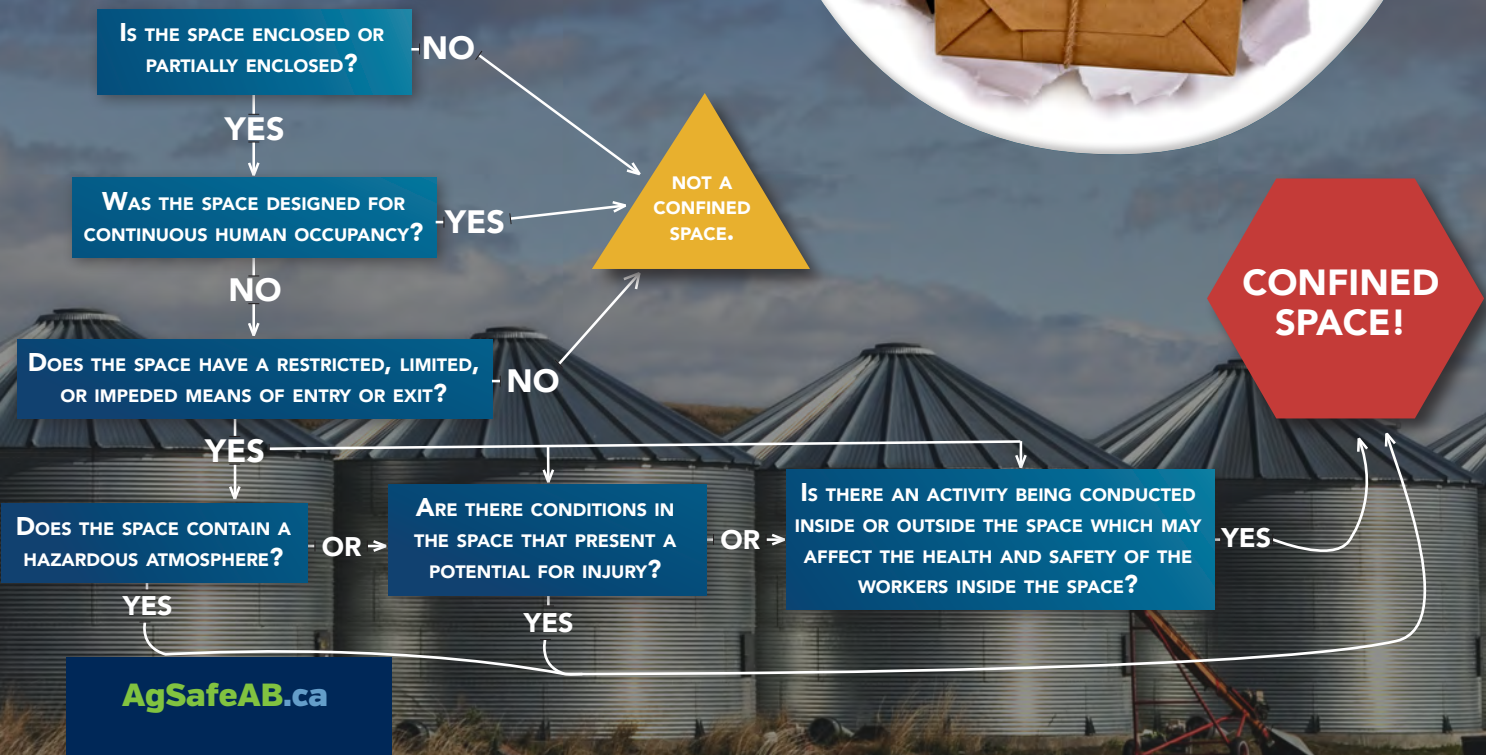
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## INTRODUCTION

Almost every farm has some sort of confined space area on the property. Sumps, wells, lagoons, grain/feed bins, channels, attics, and even some equipment are technically considered confined spaces. While we don't usually consider these areas harmful, they are in fact very dangerous.

### What is a confined space?

Confined spaces are best identified by following this flow chart:  
(from Work Safe Alberta).





# Here are the steps to QuickStart your: **CONFINED SPACE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

## **STEPS FOR CONFINED SPACE MANAGEMENT**

### **STEP 1**

Identify the confined space locations within your operations. Walk around your farm work sites and specifically apply the flow chart on the front page to facilities, equipment, and areas like sumps, grain/feed storage, lagoons and holding ponds. List all the locations that fit the criteria of confined or restricted space.

### **STEP 2**

Add signage to all confined space areas to raise awareness for all family and farm workers. Confined space signs inform the person entering the area of potential danger and also trigger the farm worker to pause and think about the potential hazards before entry.

### **STEP 3**

Develop a confined space code of practice for your farm. The code of practice will contain the following topics:

- Hazard management program for confined spaces on the farm
- Training requirements for entering the confined space
- Pre-entry checklist & atmospheric testing requirements
- Confined space standby person responsibilities
- Procedures for working in confined and restricted spaces on the farm
- Equipment lockout procedures
- Ventilation requirements for confined space entries
- Emergency response planning and training

To complete your code of practice, follow the instructions found within the Alberta Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin – Guideline for Developing a Code of Practice for Confined Space Entry (See Resource Page).

### **STEP 4**

Train all farm workers and family members about the confined space management program on your farm. This will help to ensure that everyone is familiar with the dangers of confined spaces and help protect them from harm.



## SUMMARY

These few steps will help you to start the development of a confined space management program for your farming operation. It will be important to seek additional help and information to ensure that your program adequately manages the risk associated with confirmed areas on the farm.

Grain bins are considered a confined space because they are not meant for human occupancy and they can be difficult to get in and out of. If someone became engulfed in grain, rescue is extremely difficult.



Wells, cisterns and other below ground structures are also confined spaces. Dangerous gases can collect or oxygen can be missing in these areas making them very dangerous.



Tanks and vats are confined spaces. If a worker falls ill inside, rescue can be very difficult without proper rescue equipment available.



Bunkers, root cellars, and areas that have only one point of entry are confined spaces. Oxygen displacement and drowning can render a farm worker unconscious. Providing assistance is then difficult because other workers cannot enter to provide help.



## LET IT GROW FEED THE PROGRAM

Once you have the core elements of your confined space management program started, consider the following points to grow your program.

- Consider asking for help to improve your code of practice to ensure that you have considered all the safety perspectives for your operation. There are many safety resources available including: public resources, neighbours, local businesses and external safety professionals.
- Consider purchasing better equipment for your farm confined spaces over time. Some ideas include pre-entry testing systems, better rescue systems and lock out equipment. Prioritize your expenditures towards confined spaces with the highest risk.
- Provide advanced training for your farm workers to help them manage safety issues associated with confined spaces. Well trained workers will be more prepared to handle confined space entries safely.





BE SURE TO VISIT

[www.AgSafeAB.ca](http://www.AgSafeAB.ca)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

## AgSafe Alberta Resources

Our AgSafe website contains a lot of information for you to use. Here are some examples of information that you can download.

- Hazard Management QuickStart
- Fatigue Management on the Farm QuickStart
- Working at Heights on the Farm QuickStart
- Emergency Response Planning QuickStart
- Risk Management System Information



## RESOURCES

Albert Occupational Health and Safety Code 2009 – Part 5 Confined Spaces - [http://work.alberta.ca/documents/WHS-LEG\\_ohsc\\_p05.pdf](http://work.alberta.ca/documents/WHS-LEG_ohsc_p05.pdf)

Guideline for Developing Code of Practice for Confined Space Entry - [http://work.alberta.ca/documents/WHS-PUB\\_cs001.pdf](http://work.alberta.ca/documents/WHS-PUB_cs001.pdf)

# FORMS



Confined Space Entry Permit

Confined Space Entry Log

Hazard ID Form

Emergency Response Plan Form



## AgSafe AB Connections



[www.AgSafeAB.ca](http://www.AgSafeAB.ca)



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Disclaimer – These documents have been designed to assist the farm with a quick introduction to safety at the farm gate. To comply with legislation, farm management will need to evaluate legislation in your local jurisdiction and seek the advice of a safety professional to help you meet regulatory requirements that apply to your specific farming operation.