

Toolbox Talks 2

016: Confined Entry Attendant Duties

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Think about situations you have heard of where confined entry attendant errors have resulted in tragedy. If you don't know of any, ask around. Be prepared to use these as examples.

What this Safety Talk covers:

What an attendant's duties are and why they are important to confined entry work.

Discussion notes:

Some confined entry attendant facts to think about

- The attendant may be the only link between those in the confined space and the outside world.
- The crew inside the confined space may suffer impaired judgment due to low oxygen or other factors. The attendant has to maintain clear judgment at all times.
- The attendant's job can be boring. Periodic inattentiveness may be unavoidable. But being engrossed in a conversation, paperback, or other distraction is not.
- Permits tend to be lean. Everything on that permit is there for a reason. Don't second-guess the permit. Glossing over even one item may prove fatal.

Cautions

- An attendant should never enter the vessel unless help is definitely on the way or another attendant is also present. In either case, the attendant must observe the entry cautions required by the permit (e.g., PPE). Being one more person to rescue doesn't help anyone. Poking your head in is considered entering.
- Make a point of staying in contact with the crew. This doesn't mean constant chatter. Listen for the sounds of normal work, and make a point of periodically asking for a response. For example, "How are you doing in there?" or "What is your oxygen meter showing now?"
- Never leave the area without securing a replacement attendant. If you can't find someone, the crew must exit the vessel before you can leave.
- Never accept "Go on, we'll be OK" as permission to abandon your post. Only a replacement attendant can give that permission. If the permit requires an attendant, the lack of one invalidates the permit and no crew can be in the confined space.

Duties

Attendants have duties such as these:

- Review the confined entry permit prior to allowing the crew to enter. Make sure you understand it. If you are in doubt, everyone stays out.
- If relieving another attendant while a crew is in the confined space, review the permit and ensure you understand it before giving the other attendant the OK to leave.
- Stay in communication with the crew that is in the confined space.
- Test communication equipment before reporting and then periodically thereafter. Check batteries. Test communication with the crew and with your support team (e.g., your supervisor or the first responder line).
- Get help, if needed. Don't *provide* help, but obtain it via communication (e.g., radio). Possible exception: operating extraction equipment, such as wrist

extraction devices. Call for help before commencing extraction.

- Test extraction equipment (if applicable) and ensure it's properly applied.

[Note to presenter: Address any other duties your company procedures require].

Review and discussion

1. What is the role of the attendant, and why is it important?
2. What are some things an attendant should do before giving the crew the OK to enter the confined space?
3. Suppose the job is almost done, and things are on a tight schedule. A new crew is getting ready to enter the vessel. Rather than hold things up when there haven't been any problems, would it be OK to review the permit while the crew is inside?
4. The permit requires extraction equipment for each worker. There are two sets of extraction straps, but four workers. Bob says, "That's OK. I'm just going to stand inside the door and hand tools in and out to Joe and he's not going in." How do you resolve that?
5. The permit requires extraction equipment for each worker. There are two sets of extraction straps, but three workers. Bob says, "That's OK. I'm just going to stand inside the door and hand tools in and out." Bob is planning to hand tools back and forth to you. What is wrong with this picture?
6. Knowing you needed to be alert for this job, you downed four cups of coffee. But now you need to get rid of it. Nobody in the confined space has a radio. What is required at this point?
7. You've posted yourself near the opening, so you can hear what's going on inside. Earlier, your head throbbed a bit. Now you're feeling sleepy. In fact, you've nodded off twice. What might be really going on here, and what should you do?
8. The crew inside has exceeded the time limit imposed by the permit. Fifteen minutes ago, you told them it was time to come out and yet they are still in the confined space. What should you do?
9. There's only one electrician inside the vessel, and he needs a hand taking some quick measurements. You're right there, and this will take only a minute. Why not help him?
10. While you're on duty as an attendant, your foreman walks up and starts going over another job that you'll need to start tomorrow. What are some restrictions on this kind of conversation?

Participant's Signature and Date
