

PART 9: CONFINED SPACES

VERIFICATION AND TESTING

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| Testing the atmosphere | 9.25 | <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Except as stated in subsection (7), before a worker enters a confined space, the employer must ensure that the atmosphere in the confined space is tested in accordance with this section and section 9.26.(2) The pre-entry testing must be<ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) conducted as specified in the written work procedures, and(b) completed not more than 20 minutes before a worker enters a confined space.(3) When all workers have vacated the confined space for more than 20 minutes, pre-entry testing, as required by subsection (1), must be repeated.(4) While a worker is inside a confined space with a moderate or high hazard atmosphere, additional testing must be conducted as necessary to ensure the worker's continuing safety.(5) Whenever practicable, continuous monitoring of the atmosphere must be done.(6) If a worker enters a confined space with a moderate or high hazard atmosphere, the employer must continuously monitor the atmosphere if a flammable or explosive atmosphere in excess of 20% of the lower explosive limit could develop.(7) Pre-entry atmospheric testing is not required in a confined space with a low hazard atmosphere if<ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) the location and control of the space ensures that a more hazardous atmosphere could not inadvertently develop,(b) such testing is not required to verify the effectiveness of an isolation or other pre-entry control,(c) prior representative sampling has demonstrated that the atmosphere within the space or group of similar spaces meets the low hazard atmosphere definition, and(d) the written entry procedures do not require such testing. |
| Procedures and equipment | 9.26 | <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Repealed. [B.C. Reg. 312/2003.](2) Each confined space test must be carried out by an adequately trained worker a qualified person who has training and experience to calibrate, operate and monitor testing equipment and interpret readings from the testing equipment.(3) The test record must show the date and time of the test, the initials of the tester and the levels or condition found.(4) Test results, other than continuous monitoring results, must be posted without delay at all points of entry to the confined space. |

Explanatory Notes:

Section 9.26(2) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation ("OHSR") requires that the atmospheric tests mandated by section 9.25 be carried out by an "adequately trained worker." The OHSR does not provide a definition of what constitutes adequate training for the purpose of performing the atmospheric testing required by section 9.25. This has resulted in confusion as to who can and cannot be employed as a tester.

**AMENDMENTS TO PART 9: CONFINED SPACES
IN THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATION**

Atmospheric testing is a complex process which involves an understanding of sensors, the calibration of monitoring equipment, the setting of alarm levels, and the interpretation of test results. The purpose of the amendment is to ensure that the atmospheric testing of confined spaces is only carried out by persons who have the necessary training and experience to conduct the testing.

The amendment will clarify that workers who carry out the atmospheric testing required by section 9.25 must have the necessary qualifications to perform that testing by removing the phrase “adequately trained worker” from section 9.26(2) and instead requiring that testers be qualified persons who have training and experience in the calibration, operation and monitoring of testing equipment and the interpretation of readings from testing equipment.

An OHS guideline will be published to explain that, with respect to calibration of testing equipment, the intention of the amendment is not to require that the tester must always perform the calibration of equipment. Under the amendments, calibration of testing equipment can be performed by someone other than the tester; however, the tester needs to understand the calibration process and know that the instrument has been calibrated accordingly. Testers will be required to have the training and experience to perform a field calibration (or bump test), rather than a factory calibration. Employers will be required to ensure that equipment is properly calibrated, as required under section 4.3 of the OHSR.

The “qualified person” required by new section 9.26(2) is distinct from the “qualified person” referred to in section 9.11, relating to hazard assessments and confined space entry procedures. The definition for qualified person provided in section 9.11(2) only applies for the purposes of section 9.11. The person conducting the atmospheric testing required by section 9.25 must meet the requirements of section 9.26(2), not of section 9.11.

A consequential amendment is being made to section 9.25(1) to make it clear that the testing required by section 9.25 must be done in accordance with the requirements of sections 9.25 and 9.26.