Confined spaces in craft breweries

**A confined space** is an enclosed or partially enclosed area that is big enough for a worker to enter even partially. It’s not designed for human occupancy and has a limited or restricted entrance or exit.

Examples include:

- Grain bins and silos
- Process tanks for raw materials and cleaning chemicals
- Mash tuns, lauter tuns, kettles, and whirlpools
- Grain-dust collectors

**Confined space hazards**

- **Toxic gases**
  Such as carbon dioxide in fermentation tanks
- **Falls**
  Slipping inside tanks
- **Collapse of solids**
  Engulfment in grain silos
- **Lack of oxygen**
  Oxygen displaced when purging with nitrogen
- **Temperature extremes**
  In tanks with heating systems
- **Drowning**
  Falling into liquid-filled tanks

Two B.C. workers died in a fermentation tank. One worker lost consciousness and fell into the tank after opening it and inhaling carbon dioxide gas. A fellow worker died trying to rescue him.

You are entering a confined space when your breathing zone is inside it. This includes putting your head inside the space.

**Do**

- Use a gas monitor when opening any confined space that may contain a toxic gas.
- Use a mirror or camera on an extension pole to look inside a confined space.
- Only enter a confined space if you have:
  - Permission from your supervisor.
  - The proper training and equipment.

**Don’t**

- Don’t enter spaces that have warning signs or labels.
- Don’t put your head near an opening into a confined space that might contain a toxic gas.
- Don’t try to rescue others without proper training and equipment.

All confined space hazard assessments and written entry procedures must be prepared by a qualified person with training and experience to recognize, evaluate, and control confined space hazards.

Go to worksafetc.ca for more information on confined space entry programs, safe work procedures, and risk-control recommendations.