



Maritime &
Coastguard
Agency

Identifying enclosed spaces and the precautions to take when entering

Use this guide to help you identify enclosed spaces, and to understand the precautions to take when entering an enclosed space.

1.

Identify an enclosed space

Enclosed spaces are not always obvious.

An enclosed space means a space which is not designed for continuous worker occupancy and has either or both of the following characteristics:

- a Limited openings for entry and exit.
- b Inadequate ventilation.

Some spaces such as paint and chemical lockers, CO₂ rooms and battery lockers can be entered through weathertight or shipboard doors – but these spaces should still be considered dangerous.

A space may seem safe, and the tests may indicate that it is safe at first, but if it is connected to an enclosed space, the hazardous gases can migrate, making the space dangerous.



Warning! Do not enter an enclosed space without following proper precautions, even in an emergency.

2.

Write down your enclosed spaces here



Do they all have hazardous warning signage?

7



Do you need a permit to enter? Carry out risk assessments and familiarise yourself with the regulations.

7



Are they secured (e.g. does a door or hatch prevent entry)?

7

3.

Carry out risk assessments and familiarise yourself with guidance

Familiarise yourself with the advice provided in the *Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers* (COSWP). This is a sound basis for establishing company procedure for entry into enclosed spaces.

You must carry out a risk assessment and issue a permit to work.



4.

Precautions to take when entering an enclosed space

No enclosed space should be entered into without following proper precautions:

Can the task be carried out without entering an enclosed space?

Yes



Do not enter

No

- ✓ Appoint a responsible officer to authorise entry and supervise the task.
- ✓ Appoint a competent person to assess the space.

- ✓ Carry out task-based risk assessment to consider the following:

Assessment of the space:

- Is ventilation limited?
- Does it have limited entrances and exits?
- Is it designed for continuous occupancy?
- What factors could affect the atmosphere in the space?
- How else can the space be dangerous?

Identify equipment needed and competence to complete the task safely:

- Do you have atmosphere testing equipment available in good working order, and calibrated as required?
- Do you have rescue equipment ready?
- Can the time spent working in the space be reduced?
- Can the task be deferred to a safer time, e.g. better weather/ sea conditions, when ship is alongside?

No



Do not enter

No



Do not enter

Consider the impact of other work being conducted on board, weather, sea conditions etc.

- Do you have suitable tools and equipment?
- Arrange communication between those working in the space, those supervising, and bridge and engine room (as appropriate)
- Identify personal protective equipment required
- Do the above factors prevent procedures from being followed?

No



Do not enter

Yes



Do not enter

✓ **Appoint** competent persons to carry out the task. Ensure they understand the risk assessment and safety measures in place.

✓ **Arrange** permit to work, ensure a rescue plan and rescue and resuscitation equipment is in place. Check communications are effective.

✓ **Appoint** attendant to stand at entrance of space in case emergency rescue is needed.

✓ **Isolate** pipe entry and exits, agitators and electrics if needed
Ventilate and secure the space.

✓ **Test the atmosphere** – is it within safe limits?

No



✗ Do not enter

Establish the cause.
Do not enter until it has
been made safe.

Yes

✓ **Agree procedures** for preparation and entry.

✓ **Keep testing** the atmosphere.

✓ **Keep reviewing** the risks while working.

✓ **When finished:** leave the space, secure, remove isolations and sign off permit to work.

✓ **Review risk assessment** and update if needed.



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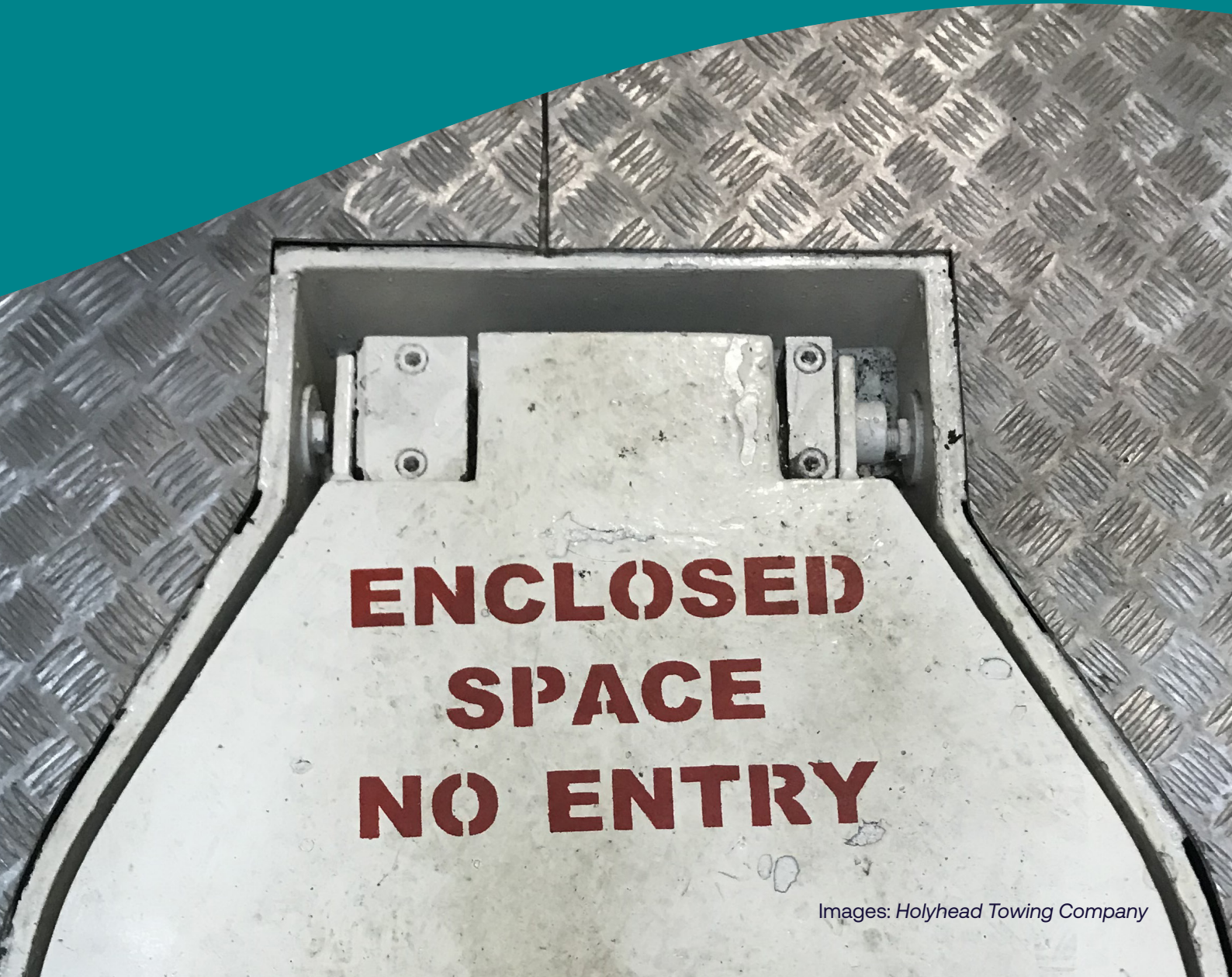
Remember:

If you see someone lying motionless
Do not rush to carry out a rescue
by yourself.

Stop, think – why are they unconscious, could
this be an enclosed space?

Should an emergency occur, the general
(or crew) alarm should be sounded
so that back-up is immediately available
to the rescue team.

Under no circumstances should the attendant
enter the space before help has arrived and
the situation has been evaluated to ensure
the safety of those entering the space.



**ENCLOSED
SPACE
NO ENTRY**

Images: Holyhead Towing Company