Summary
Working in Confined Spaces
SOP #: EHS-0077

Synopsis: There are many areas at MIT which contain spaces that are considered to be “confined” because their configurations hinder the activities of employees who must enter into, work in or exit from them. MIT’s SOP for confined space entry is designed to protect employees who must enter confined spaces to perform work related tasks. Employees participating in confined space entries must complete training with EHS.

Summary Procedures: Once a space has been identified as “confined”, it must be classified according to its known or potential hazards:

Possible examples of Non-Permit Confined Spaces:
- Air handling units
- Attic spaces
- Plenum spaces

Possible examples of Permit-Required Confined Spaces:
- Manholes
- Crawl spaces
- Tanks
- Shafts
- Boilers
- Pits

*At MIT, all manholes are Permit-Required Confined Spaces

Permit-required Confined Space Entry Procedures:
1. Entry Supervisor initiates the permit space and ensures the appropriate items listed below are noted on the permit.
2. Contact MIT Operations Center at 617-253-1500.
3. Ensure all proper isolation measures have been achieved.
4. Ensure initial cleaning and ventilation has been completed.
5. Conduct required atmospheric testing and proceed only if conditions are safe.
6. Ensure all continuous ventilation is in place and air monitoring equip. is on hand and working correctly.
7. Station the Authorized Attendant outside the Permit-Required Confined Space with the capability of maintaining constant communication with the Authorized Entrant.
8. If the space to be entered is classified as a Permit-Required Confined Space, the use of body harness, lifeline, winch and tripod are required unless use of this equipment poses a greater hazard.
9. Don all required PPE.
10. Entry Supervisor will review the completed Confined Space Permit which states acceptable entry conditions. All Authorized Attendants and Authorized Entrants shall record their names and time of entry.
11. Enter the permit space in an alert and cautious manner.
12. Evacuate the space if an evacuation order is given by the Authorized Attendant or if danger is indicated.
13. Authorized Entrants sign off the permit when exiting Permit-Required Confined Spaces and note the time.