



## June 9 — It Only Takes a Minute

**A contractor tried to sneak into a confined space without a harness.**

**I stopped him and reminded him to put his harness on.**

Most safety rules aren't ignored because people don't know them.

They're ignored because someone convinces themselves the risk is small.

It'll only take a minute. I'm just stepping in for a second. Nothing is going to happen.

During a confined space job, an employee observed a contractor attempting to enter the space without wearing the required harness. The employee immediately stopped the individual and reminded him to put on the proper equipment before entering.

Fortunately, the situation was corrected before anyone entered the space.

Confined spaces present unique hazards because conditions can change quickly and emergency situations can develop with little warning. Rescue and retrieval equipment are not intended to create extra work—they exist because the time to prepare for an emergency is before someone enters the space, not after something goes wrong.

One of the biggest challenges in safety is that shortcuts often seem harmless when viewed one at a time. A missing harness may not feel important if the task appears simple or brief. But incidents rarely happen according to our plans. The moment an employee enters a confined space, the hazards exist whether the task takes ten seconds or ten hours.

The employee who observed this situation didn't assume someone else would intervene. They addressed the issue immediately and ensured the contractor had the required protection before proceeding.

That's exactly how serious incidents are prevented.

### Hazards

- Confined space entry hazards
- Delayed emergency retrieval
- Falls during entry or exit
- Exposure to atmospheric hazards
- Increased risk during emergency response

### Words of Wisdom

The length of a task does not change the hazard. If PPE, permits, or protective equipment are required, they are required for the entire job—even if the task only takes a minute.

### Pause and Think

- Have you ever been tempted to skip a step because the task seemed quick?
- Why do people sometimes treat short-duration tasks differently than longer jobs?
- How does proper planning help protect workers during confined space entries?
- Would you feel comfortable stopping a coworker or contractor in a similar situation?
- What could happen if an emergency occurred and the required harness wasn't being used?

### Closing Thought

Most shortcuts begin with the same thought: "It'll only take a minute." That's often all it takes for an incident to occur.