



February 4 — Confined Space Without an Attendant

<p>A contractor was inside a confined space without an attendant</p>	<p>I approached him and told him that he had to leave, that he could not be inside without an attendant, he had to see someone with him.</p>
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A contractor was observed inside a confined space without an attendant present outside the space.

A confined space is not dangerous because of what you can see it's dangerous because of what can change without warning. The attendant is not optional support; they are the lifeline between the worker inside and the world outside. Without an attendant, there is no monitoring, no immediate response, and no one to recognize when conditions shift or a worker is in trouble.

**A worker went in, the space was tight,
But no one stood to watch the site.
In confined places, help must stand
One inside, one outside hand.**

In confined spaces, the difference between routine work and a fatal incident is often one missing role.

Hazards

- Delayed emergency response if a worker becomes incapacitated
- Atmospheric changes going unnoticed
- No external monitoring of worker condition
- Failed rescue attempts due to lack of coordination
- Escalation from single-worker incident to multiple casualties

Stats

- Confined space incidents frequently involve **multiple victims**, often rescuers
- Atmospheric hazards are responsible for a large percentage of confined space fatalities
- OSHA requires an attendant at permit-required confined spaces for continuous monitoring
- Many confined space fatalities occur when no trained person is positioned outside the space

Words of Wisdom

- No attendant means no safety net.
- If no one is watching, no one is ready.

Pause and Think

Confined space roles exist because things change fast in environments where escape is limited. When work feels routine, it's easy to treat the attendant as unnecessary. But confined spaces don't fail slowly. Air quality can change, workers can become disoriented, and emergencies can happen in seconds. The attendant is not there to watch work they are there to recognize when work becomes dangerous.

- What is the attendant responsible for?
- What happens if the worker inside can't call for help?
- Who notices when conditions change?