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Confined Spaces Policy

Document Control:

Policy Owner:	Director of Health & Safety, or equivalent role
Policy Author(s):	Allan Steel Graham Hakes - Communication and Operationalisation.
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Amendment History:

Version Number:	Effective Date:	Summary of Amendments:	Author:
V1.1 05 03 18	05/03/18	Annual Review – no changes	John Phillips
V1.2 02 08 22	09/08/22	Review – Minor administrative changes	Allan Steel
V1.3 10 04 26	24/09/26	Review – New template, minor administrative changes, roles and RACI grids added.	Ian Rose

1. Purpose

1.1 The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997 are relevant to all activities carried out on the University campus where entry is required into any place, including any chamber, tank, vat, silo, pit, trench, pipe, sewer, flue, well or other similar space, which, by virtue of its enclosed nature, poses a risk from fire or explosion; the loss of consciousness arising from an increase in body temperature; the loss of consciousness or asphyxiation arising from gas, fume, vapour or the lack of oxygen; drowning arising from an increase in the level of liquid; or asphyxiation arising from the presence of a free flowing solid. Under these Regulations a 'confined space' must have both of the following defining features: it must be a space which is substantially (though not always entirely) enclosed and one or more of the 'specified risks' must be present or reasonably foreseeable. Specified risks include:

- Flammable substances and oxygen enrichment
- Excessive heat
- Toxic gas, fume or vapour can lead to asphyxia or unconsciousness
- Oxygen deficiency
- Ingress or presence of liquids
- Free-flowing solids which can submerge a person, preventing breathing
- Risk of structural collapse which could entrap a person

2. Scope

2.1 This Policy applies to and within all spaces across the University's campuses, including Gibbet Hill, Westwood and Warwick Innovation Campus, Stratford-on-Avon. The Policy also applies to all activities managed by the University at any off-campus properties. This Policy is supported by arrangements, instructions, and guidance on the management of Confined Spaces, which are available on the University's Health and Safety web pages.

2.2 Under the provisions of Regulation 26, Safety Regulations and associated University Health and Safety Policy document, it is the duty of all staff, students and others working in the University to comply with this Policy, together with any other instructions, rules and guidance that may apply.

3. Responsibilities

The table below outlines the key responsibilities associated with this Policy and should be read alongside the detailed role responsibilities set out in the [Leadership and Management of Health and Safety at the University of Warwick](#) document.

Role	Responsible for
The Director of Health and Safety or equivalent position	Advising on the standards and regulations that must be achieved in order to meet legal requirements; for keeping the University's Health and Safety website up to date with the related policy documents; and for ensuring that spot checks and audits are undertaken to provide assurance that activities are being carried out in compliance with this Policy.
Heads of Departments	Ensuring this Policy is implemented within their respective areas with regard to identifying, through general risk assessment, any potential confined spaces within their respective departments and for ensuring that the Estates department is informed of all such spaces which are part of the estate. For confined spaces which are not part of the estate (associated with work equipment used for research for example) the Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that appropriate controls are put in place, using local Permits to Work, to minimise the risk to staff, contractors, students and visitors. Heads of Department are also responsible for ensuring that access to such spaces is controlled.
Departmental Senior Administrative staff	Supporting Heads of Department in meeting the expectations placed on them in relation to delivering the requirements of this Policy.
Estates Director supported by the Director of Business Services	Identifying and maintaining records of all spaces within the estate which are deemed to be confined spaces and for providing a Permit to Work system and access control systems to ensure the safety of individuals, and particularly the safety of those Estates staff and contractors required to enter such spaces.
Supervisors & Managers (including	Ensuring that all people, activities, and research projects they lead are planned, conducted, and supervised safely. This includes ensuring that appropriate risk assessments are completed, that staff and

Academic staff e.g. Principal Investigators)	students working under their supervision are competent, trained, and supported, and that all safety requirements relevant to their work are implemented and followed.
All staff	Complying with this Policy and the associated arrangements, instructions and guidance.

RACI Matrix	
Responsible	Director of Health & Safety or equivalent Estates Director Director of Business Services Heads of Department or equivalent
Accountable	Vice Chancellor Group Finance Director
Consult	Departmental Senior Administrator Supervisors Technical Services Manager Health and Safety Services Officers and Advisers
Inform	Managers (including Academic staff e.g. Principal Investigators) All staff

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 General risk assessments must identify any spaces which might be considered to meet the criteria outlined above, and such spaces must be identified and clearly marked as a 'Confined Space' with suitable signage.
- 4.2 Where there are identified confined spaces a 'Permit to Work' system must be deployed to control particularly high-risk activities, and 'Access Permits' used to control access to particularly high risk areas: Where the space in question is part of the Estate (part of a building or a component fixed to or within a building) this should be managed through the Estates Permits Office, and where the space is part of a piece of free-standing equipment or system not connected to a building this should be managed through local, departmental arrangements.
- 4.3 Priority must be given to avoiding work in confined spaces, but, if it is not reasonably practicable to carry out the work without entering the confined space, then a safe system for working within the confined space must be devised and implemented. A Permit to Work system should be used to ensure control measures are robust.
- 4.4 Where the need to enter cannot be avoided steps must be taken to reduce the duration of such entry and to ensure that suitable means of escape and /or rescue are in place, and that associated emergency arrangements are documented with the control measures.
- 4.5 Control measures must document the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (including any harnesses, atmospheric monitoring devices and breathing apparatus) which might be required for those entering the space and the rescue team(s).

- 4.6 Risk assessments must include the assessment of substances which might be present within the space and what might come into the space whilst work is underway.
- 4.7 Entry into such spaces must be managed by a nominated Authorised Person, who is responsible for the supervision of the process and the associated Permit to Work. Authorised Persons must be trained, and formally approved by their respective departments as being competent to manage such activities.
- 4.8 Those people entering such spaces and those who form rescue teams must also be appropriately trained and signed off as being competent to carry out such activities.

5. Associated Documents and Links

[Confined Spaces Intranet Site](#)

[HSE Confined Spaces](#)

[Permit to Work Intranet Site](#)

[HSE Permit to Work](#)