An emergency is defined as any occurrence (including any failure of hazard control or monitoring equipment) or event internal or external to the permit space that could endanger entrants.

Employers must develop and implement procedures for: summoning rescue and emergency services, rescuing entrants from permit spaces, providing necessary emergency services to rescued employees, and preventing unauthorized personnel from attempting a rescue.

Rescue and emergency services

Rescuers must be able to respond in a timely manner. For example, if entry is to be made into an immediately dangerous to life and health atmosphere, the rescue team or service would need to be standing by at the permit space. On the other hand, if the danger to entrants is restricted to mechanical hazards that would cause injuries (e.g., broken bones, abrasions) a response time of 10 or 15 minutes might be adequate.

If you plan to use a rescue service, you must evaluate the prospective rescue service’s ability, in terms of proficiency with rescue-related tasks and equipment, to function appropriately while rescuing entrants from the particular permit space or types of permit spaces you have.

As an employer you must:

Inform each rescue team or service of the hazards they may confront when called on to perform rescue at a particular site.

Provide the rescue team or service with access to all permit spaces from which rescue may be necessary so that the rescue team/service can develop appropriate rescue plans and practice rescue operations.

Ensure that at least one member of the rescue team or service has a current certification in first aid and CPR.

If you use employees for your rescue team you must:

Provide employees with the personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to conduct permit space rescues safely. Ensure employees are proficient in using their PPE.

Train employees to perform assigned rescue duties.

Ensure that your rescue team successfully completes the training required to establish proficiency as an authorized entrant.

Train employees in basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

These talks are a valuable part of your membership to the NDSC. Only members have access to them. If you have questions or need specific consultation about your safety plan, contact our Safety Consultants at 701-751-6100.

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Ensure that employees practice making permit space rescues at least once every 12 months, by means of simulated rescue operations in which they remove dummies, manikins, or actual persons from the actual or representative permit spaces. Representative permit spaces must, with respect to opening size, configuration, and accessibility, simulate the types of permit spaces from which rescue is to be performed.

**Nonentry rescue**

Retrieval systems or methods shall be used whenever an authorized entrant enters a permit space, unless the retrieval equipment would increase the overall risk of entry or would not contribute to the rescue of the entrant.

**Retrieval systems must meet the following requirements:**

Each authorized entrant shall use a chest or full body harness, with a retrieval line attached at the center of the entrant’s back near shoulder level, above the entrant’s head, or at another point which the employer can establish presents a profile small enough for the successful removal of the entrant.

Wristlets may be used in lieu of the chest or full body harness if you can demonstrate that the use of a chest or full body harness is infeasible or creates a greater hazard and that the use of wristlets is the safest and most effective alternative.

The other end of the retrieval line must be attached to a mechanical device or fixed point outside the permit space so that rescue can begin as soon as the rescuer becomes aware that rescue is necessary. A mechanical device shall be available to retrieve personnel from vertical type permit spaces more than 5 feet deep.

**Employee training**

The training requirements for permit-required confined spaces are located at 29 CFR 1910.146 (g)—Training.

Specific rescue and emergency service requirements are in the OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910.146(k).

**Training tips**

Simulate rescue operations from the actual permit space using dummies, mannequins, or actual persons. Use all equipment required for the rescue including PPE, retrieval equipment, and other equipment. Start with summoning the rescue services. Then perform the rescue. Finally, provide first aid and CPR (on dummies and mannequins only) as necessary for the rescue scenario.

**Where to go for more information**


OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1926.21(b)(6)—Confined space requirements for construction.