TOOLBOX TALK: WORKING SAFELY IN CONFINED SPACES

What Is a Confined Space?
A confined space is any area that:

- Has limited entry or exit, is not designed for continuous occupancy, can contain hazardous conditions such as low oxygen or toxic gases

Major Hazards:

- Oxygen-deficient atmosphere, Toxic gases or fumes, Flammable or explosive atmospheres, Engulfment hazards (soil, grain, etc.), Mechanical or electrical hazards, Restricted movement preventing escape

Safety Requirements Before Entering:

- Perform atmospheric testing (oxygen, LEL, CO, H_2S), Ensure a valid confined space entry permit is completed, Provide ventilation, if necessary, Lockout/Tagout all energy sources, A trained attendant must remain outside the space, maintain reliable communication with entrants, confirm rescue plans and equipment are in place.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Entrant:

- Follow all procedures and PPE requirements, maintain communication with attendants, exit immediately if conditions change or if instructed

Attendant:

- Monitor entrants and conditions, maintain communication, initiate emergency response if needed, NEVER enter the space for rescue

Supervisor:

- Ensure permits and procedures are followed, Verify training and qualifications of personnel

Emergency Procedures:

- Evacuate the space immediately if unsafe conditions arise, attendant notifies rescue personnel, only trained rescue staff enter the space, Never perform an unplanned rescue attempt

Key Takeaways:

- Confined spaces pose serious hidden hazards, Air testing is ALWAYS required before entry, Proper permitting, monitoring, and rescue preparation saves lives