



**Somerset
Council**

HS42 Confined Spaces Policy.

Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	Confined Spaces
Author	Jo Coles
Owner	The Corporate Health & Safety Unit
Protective Marking	Official – Unclassified
Primary Legislation	<u>The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997</u>

Policy on a Page

For the purpose of this policy, a Confined Space is defined as follows:

A confined space is one which is both enclosed or largely enclosed and has a reasonably foreseeable specified risk to workers of:

- fire
- explosion
- loss of consciousness
- asphyxiation
- drowning

This Confined Spaces policy supports and extends on the Council's overarching Health and Safety Statement of Intent and is supported by additional guidance on how best to protect employees carrying out those operations which involve confined space working.

The Council will implement appropriate arrangements for the management of confined space working and areas of confined spaces under its control.

This document will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, 3rd Party Contractors, Secondees and Volunteers.**

Key Messages

- Somerset Council will ensure that through its management of these areas, and supervision of staff, that workplace risks from Confined Spaces are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Those responsible for managing confined space activities will ensure employees are provided with suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision.
- Managers must ensure that risk assessments/permits to work are carried out for all work relating to Confined Space activities which cannot be avoided.

This "policy on a page" is a summary of the detailed policy and guidance documents, please ensure you read, understand, and comply with the arrangements stated.

Responsibilities

Somerset Council	Directors and Senior Managers	Service Managers
Authorised Persons (AP) who issue permits to work	Premise Managers, Property Services, or those in control of premises	
Employees	Corporate Health and Safety Unit	

Somerset Council will ensure:

- Compliance with The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997.
- Through the management of its Confined Spaces and the supervision of its staff/contractors, and information/equipment provided to its customers, that risks arising from these areas and activities are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

Directors and Delegated Senior Managers will:

- Ensure that this policy and guidance is implemented in their respective business areas.
- Ensure business areas under their control are adequately resourced to implement effective arrangements to control risks associated with confined space working so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that Managers and employees under their control whose duties involve working in Confined Spaces are trained as appropriate in the policy and procedures, safe working practices, systems & Permits to Work (PTW).

Service Managers will:

- Ensure that activities involving confined spaces are avoided, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out for all confined space work activities which cannot be avoided, and safe systems of work are applied.
- Ensure the requirement for personal protective equipment is given adequate consideration when undertaking the risk assessments.
- Ensure employees are consulted during the risk assessment process.
- Ensure that all confined working is properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out in a safe manner.
- Plan for emergencies, implement effective rescue procedures, and where risk assessments have identified a need, issue permits to work.
- Provide direction, guidance, and support for the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure all work equipment associated with confined space working is properly inspected and maintained.

- Ensure that all staff involved in confined space working are aware of this policy, understand its contents and comply with local procedures and safe systems of work.
- Ensure recruiting managers clearly outline confined space work activities in the recruitment information made available to prospective applicants. Giving due regard for the candidate's ability to complete the tasks required.
- Ensure all staff who work in confined spaces are fit to do so.
- Ensure that staff who work in confined spaces and those who issue permits to work, have appropriate information, instruction, training, and supervision.
- Ensure all contractors employed are competent to undertake confined space working and are appropriately managed when on site.

Authorised Persons (AP) who issue permits to work will:

- Be responsible for the issue of the permit to work and its cancellation.
- Ensure those concerned are working in accordance with their risk assessments and safe systems of work.
- Ensure all necessary precautions, including emergency procedures are considered and implemented where required.
- Check safety arrangements as required by the permit procedures.
- Act upon any report of an activity or defect likely to endanger safety.
- Check the workplace before a permit is issued.
- Check work equipment installed or assembled prior to use.
- Implement a permit to work process for confined space working.

Premises Managers, Property Services, or those in control of premises will:

- Ensure all workers have sufficient knowledge of the area, where required providing detailed site plans and other information relevant to the planning of confined space working.
- Ensure risk assessments, safe systems of work and permits to work are in place before allowing confined space working to take place.
- Monitor any works to be carried out on The Council's premises.
- Ensure that in the case of new buildings and when modifying existing buildings, they are designed to minimise risks as effectively as possible.

Employees will:

- Report any illness, medical condition, or medication that may prevent them from working in confined spaces.
- Identify and report any defects found in relation to equipment provided for confined space working.

- Co-operate with any training requirement and use the equipment supplied properly.
- Follow instructions or arrangements provided to them by their employer or person in control in compliance with the requirements and prohibitions under the relevant statutory provisions.
- Report unsafe acts and misuse of equipment used for confined space working.
- Act in accordance with policy, procedures, safe systems of work which pertain to confined space working.
- Co-operate with any training requirements and use equipment supplied properly.
- Report any unsafe acts, misuse of, or missing equipment.
- Request & attend training as required.
- Assist in the creation of Risk Assessments/Safe Systems of Work (SSOW) relating to the task.

The Corporate Health and Safety Unit will:

- Offer advice to managers regarding this policy and associated guidance.
- Maintain and communicate this policy.
- Review this policy at intervals not exceeding 3 years.
- Provide technical advice when required.
- Provide assistance in seeking relevant training when requested/required.

Governance Arrangements

Policy Compliance

If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Somerset Council's disciplinary procedure.

Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within Somerset Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and publishing the policy.
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy.
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation.
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation.

Responsible	Corporate Health & Safety Unit
Accountable	Chief Executive
Consulted	LGR JNF Union Group, LGR H&S Sub-Workstream, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG)
Informed	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3rd parties (on request)

Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, for instance when there is a change in statutory requirements and/or HSE guidance is revised, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
	Jo Coles	V1.0	New policy - draft

Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor		
Service Director of Workforce and chair of HSWG		
HR Committee		