IDENTIFICATION & SCREENING PACK

Free printable + fillable South African workplace tool

WHAT COUNTS AS A CONFINED SPACE?

20 workplace examples | 5-question screening | site inventory | action register | assessor handover

START HERE - NOT A PERMIT TO ENTER

A screening decision is not an atmospheric safety certificate. General Safety Regulation 5(1) requires competent atmospheric testing, evaluation and written safety certification for the actual proposed work and duration before entry in the circumstances described by the regulation.

Do not enter an uncertain or suspected confined space on the basis of this blank pack.

USE THIS PACK IN FOUR STEPS

1 Identify possible spaces using the 20-example reference.

2 Complete the screening questions for each workplace asset.

3 Add uncertain spaces to the register for competent assessment.

4 Assign controls, deadlines and verification before any entry.

ASK ABOUT CONFINED-SPACE TRAINING

HOW TO USE THE SCREENING TOOL

South African meaning and responsible decision-making

The governing distinction

South African General Safety Regulations describe a confined space through enclosed, restricted or limited conditions and the potential for dangerous substances or oxygen-deficient air. Construction, location, contents and activities matter; labels alone do not determine every case.

What this checklist can do

Flag suspect spaces, record foreseeable atmospheric hazards and support a documented referral to a competent assessor.

What it cannot do

Certify air quality, approve entry, substitute for a risk assessment, specify gas limits, satisfy all legal duties or provide a rescue authorisation.

What if unsure?

Treat the space as requiring further assessment. Control access, identify competent roles and verify all applicable law and site-specific controls before any entry.

RECORD ALL FOUR ELEMENTS

- Physical form / access
- Contents and possible atmosphere
- Work that may change conditions
- Connections to adjacent plant and services

20 WORKPLACE EXAMPLES

Examples are screening prompts, not automatic classifications

POSSIBLE SPACE	SCREENING CLUES
Water storage tank	Cleaning, restricted opening, residues
Fuel tank	Flammable vapours, residual product
Chemical process vessel	Reaction residues, gas, oxygen
Sewer manhole	Toxic gases, oxygen, incoming water
Sewer line	Restricted route, hazardous atmosphere
Stormwater culvert	Rainfall, sediment and gas pockets
Industrial sump	Sludge and process liquid
Pump chamber	Leakage, gases and access
Grain silo	Flowing grain and suspended dust
Grain hopper	Engulfment and dust
Boiler drum	Heat, access and isolation
Industrial pipe	Remaining product and connections
Mixer tank	Blades, cleaners and fumes
Valve chamber	Service gas and pooled water
Utility tunnel	Ventilation and access
Septic tank	Sewage gases and oxygen
Wastewater digester	Biogas and process inputs
Refrigeration pit	Displaced oxygen, leaks
Ship compartment	Cargo residues and ventilation
Cable vault	Flooding and service gases

A space does not become safe merely because it has a wide hatch or is currently empty. Conversely, a small room is not automatically a regulated confined space.

FIVE-QUESTION SCREENING FORM

Complete one form per asset - duplicate this page as needed

Site / employer

Asset ID / exact location

Q1 Is the space enclosed, restricted or limited?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

Q2 Could hazardous gases, dust, fumes or liquids be present?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

Q3 Could oxygen depletion or displacement occur?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

Q4 Could the job or nearby process change the atmosphere?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

Q5 Do uncertainties require competent evaluation?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

Screened by (name / role)

Date and next review

SCREENING DECISION

☐ Refer for competent assessment ☐ Further investigation required

STOP: This form does not authorise entry.

SITE INVENTORY REGISTER

Keep a location-based list of all suspected spaces

Company / site

Register owner

ASSET / PLACE	RISK / SOURCE	DECISION / OWNER
Asset 1: _____	_____	_____
Asset 2: _____	_____	_____
Asset 3: _____	_____	_____
Asset 4: _____	_____	_____
Asset 5: _____	_____	_____
Asset 6: _____	_____	_____
Asset 7: _____	_____	_____
Asset 8: _____	_____	_____

Use one screening page per asset. Record whether further assessment is pending and do not infer that a missing entry means the area is safe.

SITE HAZARD PROFILE

Document the possibility of changing conditions

- [ ] Oxygen depletion or displacement
- [ ] Toxic or irritating gas, dust or vapour
- [ ] Flammable atmosphere or combustible dust
- [ ] Cleaning chemical or coating vapour
- [ ] Liquid ingress or flowing materials
- [ ] Moving machinery or stored energy
- [ ] Heat, pressure or restricted rescue access
- [ ] Nearby valve, drain or process changes
- [ ] Welding, grinding or other new work
- [ ] Unknown contents or inadequate information

Observed or suspected materials

Likely changes during work

Immediate restriction / action needed

Do not copy generic safe-gas thresholds from a template. A competent person must select appropriate assessment and certification for the actual situation and work.

COMPETENT-ASSESSMENT HANDOVER

Questions to resolve before anyone plans entry

- [ ] What exactly is the space, current condition and proposed work?
- [ ] What were its prior contents and any cleaning chemicals?
- [ ] Which gases, vapours, dusts, liquids or oxygen hazards can arise?
- [ ] What access, isolation, ventilation and monitoring could be needed?
- [ ] How could the work or adjacent plant change atmospheric conditions?
- [ ] Who is competent to assess, test, evaluate and certify if required?
- [ ] What additional entry, standby and rescue controls are necessary?

Referred to / role

Requested assessment date

Supporting documents / plant drawings / process history

CORRECTIVE ACTION TRACKER

Follow the risk to a documented decision

ISSUE / ASSET	OWNER / DUE	EVIDENCE / STATUS
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

The reviewer should confirm closure on evidence, not a tick alone. Escalate outstanding hazards and prohibit unassessed entry pending the applicable controls.

Reviewed by / role

Review date

TOOLBOX TALK & SIGN-OFF

Help teams identify, report and avoid unassessed entry

- [ ] Space names alone do not establish safety or legal classification.
- [ ] An empty vessel can still contain residual gases or low oxygen.
- [ ] Cleaning, welding and maintenance can change conditions.
- [ ] A previous reading is not a permanent assurance of safe air.
- [ ] No blank screening checklist, permit or course certificate authorises entry.
- [ ] Suspected confined spaces require escalation to the site process.

Briefing leader

Date / location

Attendee 1

Attendee 2

Attendee 3

Attendee 4

AUTHORITATIVE REFERENCES

Use current legislation and site-specific competent advice

South African OHS Act 85 of 1993

General employer duties and prevention principles.

OPEN SOURCE / REFERENCE

General Safety Regulation 1: definitions

The definition used to screen potentially confined spaces.

OPEN SOURCE / REFERENCE

General Safety Regulation 5: work in confined spaces

Atmospheric evaluation and written certification obligations.

OPEN SOURCE / REFERENCE

UK HSE confined spaces overview

Supplementary hazard awareness - not South African law.

OPEN SOURCE / REFERENCE

GET HELP WITH YOUR NEXT STEP

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REQUEST TRAINING CALLBACK

REQUEST ON-SITE QUOTE