

Testing & Monitoring the Atmosphere of a Confined Space

Every person working in a permit-required confined space must be familiar with basic air monitoring.

Never rely on your own senses to detect atmospheric hazards because:

- Many atmospheric hazards can't be smelled or seen.
- Some hazards can't be detected until they are already harmful.
- Some gases desensitize the nose after only a brief exposure.

The types of monitoring will be based on the hazards present.

The three types of potential hazards are:

- **oxygen deficiency or enrichment**
- **fire or explosion**
- **toxic contaminants**

The spaces must be monitored before entry. Then, depending on the hazards and the type of work being performed, testing will be conducted either continuously or periodically.

Continuous monitoring is required if:

- Ventilation is necessary to control atmospheric hazards.
- Welding or other hot work is necessary.
- Chemicals with airborne hazards are being used in the space for cleaning or other purposes.