



National
Operational
Guidance

Control measure

Avoid entry: Confined space



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Developed and maintained by the NFCC



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Control measure knowledge

Avoiding entry into a confined space to deal with an emergency, should always be the preferred approach. The [Confined Spaces Regulations](#) and the [Confined Spaces Regulations \(Northern Ireland\)](#) state:

'No person at work shall enter a confined space to carry out work for any purpose unless it is not reasonably practicable to achieve that purpose without such entry.'

If objectives can be achieved without entering the confined space, the risk of injury to personnel and worsening of conditions, for example, disturbance of sludge, in the confined space are significantly reduced. It is vital to assess the confined space to establish the risks presented by entry in comparison to the benefits of doing so.

All personnel should be aware of the limitations of their knowledge, training and equipment so they can assess the risk and make an informed tactical decision and intervention.

If the full risk assessment indicates that it is not safe enough for personnel to be deployed into the confined space, specialist advice or assistance should be requested. For further information refer to

- Incident command – [Specialist advice](#)
- Incident command – [Specialist resources](#)

If the confined space is in an industrial context, the responsible person or on-site staff may be able to provide the fire and rescue service with details of specialists who are competent to work in confined spaces.

Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Maintain a register of specialists from the fire and rescue service or other organisations who are competent to work in confined spaces



Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Evaluate the range of options that avoid committing personnel to work in a confined space
- Consider requesting specialist advice or assistance if the nature of the confined space is unsafe for personnel to enter