

**PWYLLGOR IECHYD A DIOGELWCH
HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:	04 March 2025
TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:	Compliance with the Confined Space Regulations 1997
CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:	Andrew Carruthers, Chief Operating Officer
SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:	Paul Evans, Head of Estates Risk and Compliance

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)

Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)

Er Sicrwydd/For Assurance

**ADRODDIAD SCAA
SBAR REPORT**

Sefyllfa / Situation

This report has been prepared to highlight the principal duties of the Confined Space Regulations 1997 and confirm our assurances of adherence by outlining the management arrangements implemented by Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB).

Cefndir / Background

The regulations are specifically designed to protect workers from risks associated with confined spaces. Below, we explain the scope and detail and the compliance measures implemented.

Overview of the Confined Spaces Regulations 1997

The regulations apply to workplaces where confined spaces pose risks of serious injury or death. A confined space is defined as any substantially enclosed area with limited entry/exit points, not designed for continuous occupancy, and where hazardous conditions (e.g., toxic gases, oxygen deficiency and engulfment) may arise. Employer duties under the regulations include:

1. Avoiding entry where possible (e.g., by completing tasks externally).
2. Implementing a safe system of work if entry is unavoidable.
3. Establishing emergency procedures before work commences.
4. Conducting risk assessments to identify hazards and implement controls.

The requirements in the Confined Space Regulations 1997 are reinforced by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which mandate systematic risk assessments for all work activities.

Risk Assessments prior to any work in confined spaces must be conducted. These assessments identify potential hazards and outline the necessary control measures to mitigate risks. All findings are documented and communicated to the relevant personnel. The risk assessment forms part of the permit and dictates what level of entry procedure is required.

The following assessment section of this report provides assurance that HDdUHB are adhering to the key principals of the confined space regulations 1997 and identify any shortfalls in our compliance.

Key principals of confined space regulations 1997

1. Risk Assessments and Hazard Control
2. Avoiding Entry Where Possible
3. Safe Systems of Work for Essential Entry
4. Emergency Procedures
5. Training and Competency
6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Asesiad / Assessment

1. Risk Assessments and Hazard Control

Before entry to a confined space, the confined spaces entry procedure is identified and assessed for risks (e.g., atmospheric hazards, structural dangers). Control measures include ventilation, gas monitoring, and isolation of hazardous substances. As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring a safe working environment, we can fully confirm that all designated confined spaces within our facilities have been comprehensively risk assessed.

These assessments have been conducted in accordance with relevant health and safety regulations and guidelines, providing a thorough evaluation of potential hazards associated with each confined space.

The risk assessments have served as the foundation for categorising the level of risk associated with each confined space. This categorisation process has enabled us to identify and prioritise areas requiring additional safety measures or controls to mitigate risks effectively.

By doing so, we have ensured that all necessary precautions are in place to protect employees and contractors who may need to enter these restricted spaces. Furthermore, the risk assessments have played a crucial role in supporting the development and completion of entry procedures for confined spaces.

These procedures are designed to ensure that all necessary safety protocols are followed before, during, and after entry into a confined space. This includes ensuring that appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is used, that adequate ventilation is provided, and that emergency response plans are in place.

We are confident to confirm that our risk assessment and entry procedures for confined spaces are fully compliant with relevant health and safety standards. Regular reviews and updates of these assessments and procedures are scheduled to ensure ongoing compliance and to reflect any changes in operations or regulations.

2. Avoiding Entry Where Possible

In line with our commitment to safety, we have also prioritised avoiding entry into confined spaces wherever possible. To achieve this, we have invested heavily in advanced digital imagery technologies that enable us to view and inspect confined spaces remotely.

3. Safe Systems of Work for Essential Entry

To further enhance safety, we have implemented a robust permitting system that ensures all entries into confined spaces are properly authorised. This system guarantees that only trained and competent personnel are allowed to enter confined spaces who are fully aware of the entry procedures and associated safety protocols.

Additionally, our permitting system verifies that all necessary safety equipment and PPE are available and used correctly. This includes respiratory protection, fall protection, and communication devices, among others. By ensuring that everyone involved in confined space entry is properly trained and equipped, we maintain a safe system of work that minimises risks and protects our staff.

4. Emergency Procedures

As stated above, the risk assessments have played a crucial role in supporting the development and completion of entry procedures for confined spaces. These procedures are designed to ensure that all necessary safety protocols are followed before, during, and after entry into a confined space.

This includes ensuring that appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is used, that adequate ventilation is provided, and that emergency response plans are in place. Our entry procedures are clearly defined and include protocols for monitoring atmospheric conditions, ensuring proper ventilation, and maintaining communication with personnel outside the confined space. These procedures also detail the required number of personnel required for the task and support what rescue arrangement are needed.

5. Training and Competency

All relevant staff members have undergone comprehensive accredited medium risk training on confined space entry procedures and rescue practices. This training ensures that our employees are well-informed about the risks associated with confined spaces and are equipped with the knowledge to perform their duties safely. This training was carried out on site to ensure that our staff are familiar with the health boards own confined spaces, entry procedures, safety equipment and permit arrangements.

Our dedicated Confined Space/H&S Compliance officer also ensures staff are fully familiar with policies and procedures through monthly toolbox talk sessions. Short, focused discussions are held covering confined space tasks to review hazards, control measures, and procedural updates. Examples include:

- Risk Assessment.
- Correct use of gas detectors and ventilation equipment.
- Recognition of early warning signs (e.g., dizziness, equipment alarms).
- Emergency exit protocols and communication methods.
- Scenario-Based Learning: Recent incidents or near-misses.

6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

We are confident the management arrangements implemented are robust and effective. We also strive to monitor these protocols regularly to ensure continuous improvement in what we do. An area we are currently focusing on, is to conduct a comprehensive review of our entry procedures and risk assessments for confined spaces to ensure they align with the latest best practices. This review will help identify any potential gaps and opportunities to further enhance our safety protocols.

Additionally, we are aware that during out-of-hours working, we may not always be able to follow our standard procedures for certain confined space entries due to resource constraints.

In such situations and to mitigate the risks as far as reasonably practicable, we have the option to arrange for suitably trained external contractors to attend site. This is specifically in situations where the work may impact the operational running of the site and therefore cannot wait until the following morning.

As a last resort, we can and have done so previously requested the support of emergency services to assist us. The HDdUHB has a strong working relationship with the local fire & rescue where we have conducted on site scenario-based training in many of our confined spaces.

We will continue to monitor these arrangements closely to ensure that they remain effective and safe. Also, we have a comprehensive Confined Space and Restricted Access Policy (Policy Number 393) that includes specific guidelines for confined space work, this is reviewed every three years.

Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The Health and Safety Committee is requested to:

- Acknowledge and gain assurance that we have implemented robust management arrangements to ensure HDdUHB are complying with the Confined Space Regulations 1997.
- Acknowledge the additional work we are planning to review our procedures and our out-of-hours resource arrangements. This review will be fully conducted by July 2025.

Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau)

Objectives: (must be completed)

Committee ToR Reference:
Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:

3.18 Ensure there is a process of review of health and safety compliance across the whole of the Health Board’s business undertakings, including through a programme of health and safety audits and agree and monitor KPIs for health and safety performance to ensure evidence of compliance with external standards and regulatory requirements.

Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	N/A
Parthau Ansawdd: Domains of Quality Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	1. Safe 3. Effective 4. Efficient
Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality: Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	6. All Apply
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	4. The best health and wellbeing for our individuals, families and communities 5. Safe sustainable, accessible and kind care 3. Striving to deliver and develop excellent services
Amcanion Cynllunio Planning Objectives	8 Estates plans
Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2021-2022	10. Not Applicable

Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:

Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	From the HB's approved and ratified Confined Space & Restricted Access Policy and the Legislation and Guidance referenced to in the report.
Rhestr Termiau: Glossary of Terms:	Contained within the body of the report.
Partïon / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Ansawdd Iechyd a Diogelwch: Parties / Committees consulted prior to Health and Safety Committee:	Not Applicable

Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)

Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:	Not Applicable
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Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:	Not Applicable
Gweithlu: Workforce:	Delivering a safe working environment
Risg: Risk:	Not Applicable
Cyfreithiol: Legal:	Potential for legal challenge if HDdUHB does not comply with Confined Space Regulations 1997
Enw Da: Reputational:	Potential for legal challenge if HDdUHB does not comply with Confined Space Regulations 1997
Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:	Not Applicable
Cydraddoldeb: Equality:	Not Applicable