

Welding in confined spaces: What you need to know about OAR 437-002-0279



New requirements in OAR 437-002-0279, Additional Oregon Confined Space Requirements, are effective Sept. 1, 2022.

The rule's title means that, when employees perform welding operations in confined spaces, employers must follow the requirements in *OAR 437-002-0279* and the [General Requirements](#) for all welding operations (29 CFR 1910.252).

Before employees perform welding operations in a [confined space](#), employers must evaluate the space to determine if it has one or more hazards that make it a [permit space](#) — meaning it has any of the following characteristics:

- It has, or could have, a hazardous atmosphere
- It contains material that could trap or bury a person
- It is shaped so that a person could become trapped or asphyxiated
- It has other safety or health hazards that could harm a person

Employees cannot enter a confined space until it has been fully evaluated by their employer.

- If the evaluation determines that hazards associated with the space are not directly related to the welding process – such as slippery surfaces,

excessive noise, and/or poor lighting – then the requirements of [OAR 437-002-0146, Confined Spaces](#) apply.



- If the evaluation determines that the only hazards associated with the space are directly related to the welding process, then the requirements of OAR 437-002-0279, Additional Oregon Confined Space Requirements, apply.

Employers must:

1. Control respiratory hazards in the space with forced air ventilation or require the use of supplied air respirators in accordance with the Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134).

When forced air ventilation is used, it must do the following:

- Be sufficient enough to protect employees entering the space from the respiratory hazards associated with the welding process
- Ventilate the immediate area in the space where each employee is working
- Continue until all employees have left the space

2. Ensure that the employees continuously test the internal atmosphere of the space with a properly calibrated, direct-reading instrument so the atmosphere remains safe while they are inside. This includes:

- Providing all necessary equipment for testing the internal atmosphere of the space at no cost to the employees
- Ensuring employees use and maintain the equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- Training the employees how to use the equipment
- Ensuring that all employees leave the space immediately if at any time atmospheric conditions are outside the ranges that are recognized as safe, or any other hazardous condition is detected

3. Document each entry and include the following information:

- Date of entry
- Duration of the entry
- Location of the space
- Hazards in the space directly related to the welding process
- Measures taken to eliminate those hazards
- Identity (such as make and model) of the direct-reading instruments used to test the atmosphere
- Conditions that require the evacuation of the space
- Name, job title, contact information, and signature of the person responsible for ensuring entry conditions are safe

Employers must keep the documentation for at least one year from the entry date.

If there is an exposure to a toxic substance or harmful physical agent, the employer must keep the employee's exposure monitoring record for at least 30 years, as per [29 CFR 1910.1020](#), Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records.



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Workers

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The Technical Section of Oregon OSHA produced this fact sheet to highlight health and safety programs and rules. The information is intended to supplement the rules and provide best practices to employers.