



# HAZARD ALERT

September 2000

## Confined Spaces - Winery Vessels

**Work at a winery can expose individuals to life-threatening situations. When cleaning or emptying tanks, and checking the fermentation process, employees are sometimes directed to bodily enter a tank or place their head inside a tank. The air inside a tank or vat may not be sufficient to support life when gases such as carbon monoxide or carbon dioxide have displaced oxygen. If the air is not tested prior to exposure, the result can be deadly.**

Recent OR-OSHA inspections revealed serious deficiencies in some of the procedures used in tank entry. Exposure to gases produced in the process of wine making can be deadly and the practice of using fans to purge the air inside a tank prior to entry is often not enough. Testing must be done to determine safe oxygen levels. The use of an oxygen meter is among approved methods.

*Note: Odor and other sensations are not good indicators of dangers that may be present. A common misconception is that gases associated with the process of wine making can be detected by a specific odor. Some common gases, such as carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide, are odorless.*

When tanks, vats, or other vessels are present in the workplace, you must determine which confined space procedures apply. Generally, all winery tanks are permit-required confined spaces. In order to meet administrative requirements, employers are required to:

- Evaluate the work environment for confined spaces
- Identify hazards to employees
- Develop written procedures to protect employees from those hazards
- Train employees in the procedures established

OR-OSHA's Consultation Program can help you assess your current program or create and implement a program for your workplace. OR-OSHA's consultative services are confidential and available to all Oregon employers. There is no charge for using this service. Call and ask questions or schedule a consultation: Portland, (503) 229-6193; Eugene, (541) 686-7913; Medford, (541) 776-6016/6017; Salem, (503) 373-7819; Bend, (541) 388-6068; or Pendleton (541) 276-2353.

### Information resources:

Permit-required confined space rules are located on the OR-OSHA Web site at [www.orosha.org](http://www.orosha.org). Printed publication materials are available by calling the OR-OSHA Resource Center, (503) 378-3272. If you have questions, call (800) 922-2689 and ask to speak to a technical specialist.

### Resource links:

1910.146, Permit-Required Confined Spaces rule: [www.cbs.state.or.us/external/oshapdf/rules/division\\_2/1910-146.pdf](http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/oshapdf/rules/division_2/1910-146.pdf)

Fact sheet: Confined Space [www.cbs.state.or.us/external/oshapdf/pubs/fact\\_sheets/fs11.pdf](http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/oshapdf/pubs/fact_sheets/fs11.pdf)

Pamphlet: Confined Space; Not Designed to be Occupied [www.cbs.state.or.us/external/oshapdf/pubs/2864.pdf](http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/oshapdf/pubs/2864.pdf)



**Oregon OSHA**  
**www.orosha.org**  
**(800) 922-2689**

Hazard alerts provide information on unusual safety or health hazards or unusual or hazardous materials or practices. They contain information from OR-OSHA field staff, research from the Standards and Technical Resource staff and various published materials. For more information contact the Standard and Technical Resources Section at 503-378-3272, toll free at 1-800-922-2689 or visit our Web site at [www.orosha.org](http://www.orosha.org)