

# Two workers die inside agriculture tanker

In January 2018, two men were found dead in the bottom of a fibreglass tank on a trailer. The tanker/trailer is a purpose built tri-axle trailer built for the transport of dunder and molasses.

It is understood the two men were cleaning the residue in the tanks after unloading the day before. It is believed the last tanker load transported was 20 cubic metres of Suplaflo (dunder cleaned (no dirt)) with 4 per cent urea mix – which is a sugar-cane by-product. Investigations are continuing.

## Preventing a similar incident

Working in a [confined space](#) can increase the risk of injury from noise, being overcome by fumes, gases or oxygen depletion, high or low temperatures, manual handling, and slips, trips and falls. It is vital to be aware of the dangers of working in confined spaces. A confined space includes any enclosed or partially enclosed space that is not designed or intended primarily to be occupied by a person, and is intended to be at normal atmospheric pressure while a person is in the space and is a risk because of the atmosphere, contaminants or engulfment.

Examples of confined spaces, other than tankers, may include some types of excavations or trenches, drainage or sewerage pipes, and crawl spaces.

Employers should ensure that people working in a confined space are safe by:

- having compliant confined space signage in place
- ensuring they are trained in confined space entry processes
- ensuring they are competent in performing the confined space entry task
- completing a risk assessment
- implementing a confined space entry permit system
- ensuring any hazards and risks in the confined space are controlled and safely managed prior to entry of the confined space
- placing a stand-by-person outside the confined space to talk to anyone in the confined space and implement emergency procedures if required
- providing personal protective equipment, and rescue, first-aid and fire suppression equipment
- establishing a rescue, communication and continuous monitoring plan prior to entering a confined space
- supplying safety harnesses and safety (or rescue) lines where there is a danger of falling while entering or leaving the confined space
- ensuring the area is well ventilated.

# Statistics

Since, 2012, there have been 18 workers' compensation claims accepted for workers injured due to chemical contact in a confined space.

During the same period, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland has issued 45 improvement notices and 18 prohibition notices for contraventions and risks to health and safety associated with confined spaces.

## More information

- [How to manage work health and safety risks code of practice 2021](#) (PDF, 0.65 MB)
- [Confined spaces code of practice 2021](#) (PDF, 1.43 MB)
- [Confined spaces](#)

### Support for people affected by a serious workplace incident

Have you been affected by a workplace fatality, illness or serious injury? For advice and support, visit our [Facebook page](#) or email [ohs.coronialliaison@oir.qld.gov.au](mailto:ohs.coronialliaison@oir.qld.gov.au).

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