ALABAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

TIM AYERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NOVEMBER 2025

Director's Comments:

One of the most significant recent developments in Montgomery for the construction industry is the creation of the Alabama Job Order Contracting (JOC) Program. The initiative originates from the Department of Finance's Real Property Management (RPM) Division of Construction Management (DCM).

According to DCM, Job Order Contracting is an optional procurement tool for maintenance, repair, renovation, and minor construction projects. The JOC model streamlines the Title 39 process for smaller projects by awarding contracts based on competitively priced unit costs for common work items. Once awarded, the contract can be used to execute multiple projects — without the need to separately advertise, bid, and award each one.

Under this framework, state agencies that own and maintain their facilities would be able to use the statewide JOC program to complete their projects. RPM has contracted with Gordian to assist in launching and managing the program.

However, the rollout of this initiative has raised considerable concern. The process has moved quickly, with limited transparency, prompting AUCA to join a coalition of our fellow construction industry trade associations in strongly opposing DCM's plan to implement the JOC program. Our shared concerns center on the lack of openness surrounding the program's development, the reduced competition built into the contracting model, and the inadequate oversight that would accompany its administration.

Construction is not a commodity, and robust competition is fundamental to responsible public procurement. Granting broad, year-long contracts to a single contractor - based on nationally published labor and material prices undercuts the competitive bidding process and conflicts with Alabama's longstanding commitment to fair, open, and accountable procurement.

In response, our coalition has formally written to Alabama Finance Director Bill Poole requesting a meeting to discuss these issues in detail. Our goal is to ensure that any future procurement approach remains consistent with Alabama's competitive bid law, Title 39, and reflects the best practices that protect taxpayers, contractors, and the public interest.

Tim

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News & Notes:

Tuscaloosa Industry Lunch Meeting

November 4, 2025:

OSHA Requirements for Utility Contractors

Presented By: Randy Easterling - MSPH, CIH, CSP

UA SafeState

The presentation included a discussion and overview of OSHA regulations and an emphasis on the OSHA standards that are most relevant to Utility Contractors.

News & Notes:

AUCA 2026 Calendars:

AUCA has received a limited supply of 2026 Calendars. If you would like to have one of these hanging on your office wall, please contact the AUCA office and we will make arrangements for delivery before they're all gone.

News & Notes:

ALABAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION 2026 LEADERSHIP TEAM

The list of Officers and Directors below reflects the members elected to serve on the 2026 Leadership Team at the October 16, 2025 Fall General Meeting in Montgomery.

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: ROBBIE BUTLER, *CLEARY CONSTRUCTION, INC.*

1ST VICE PRESIDENT: RONNIE GOLDEN, *CG JONES, LLC*

2ND VICE PRESIDENT: RANDY BISHOP, *CONSTRUCTION LABOR SERVICES, INC.*

SECRETARY/TREASURER: GAVIN JONES, *BAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS, INC.*

BOARD MEMBERS

JIM BALLINTINE, *ACIPCO*

DOUG BLANKENSHIP, *BLANKENSHIP CONTRACTING, INC.*

JAKE BROWN, *RUSSO CORP.*

BILL CARTER, *BILL CARTER CONSULTING, LLC*

SHAUN GONZALES, *WEAVER ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY, INC.*

ANDY HARSHMAN, *JOHN PLOTT COMPANY*

JAY HOLCOMB, *LAMBERT, INC.*

LARRY LOGSDON, *WALLACE, JORDAN, RATLIFF, & BRANDT, LLC*

MARK MAYFIELD, *MILLER PIPELINE, LLC*

RYAN McCLENDON, *MARSH McLENNAN AGENCY*

BILL McGOUGH, *W.R. MITCHELL CONTRACTOR, INC.*

RICHARD MURPHREE, *EMPIRE PIPE & SUPPLY*

AARON SCHMIDT, *SCHMIDT ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRUCTION, INC.*

CHARLES SMITH, *VULCAN MATERIALS COMPANY*

CHAD TUBBS, *FERGUSON WATERWORKS*

STEVE WALKER, *JOHNSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.*

News & Notes:

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Office of the Director
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www.finance.alabama.gov

Kay Ivey
Governor

Bill Poole
Director of Finance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 1, 2025

Contact: Ethan Girona
ethan.girona@finance.alabama.gov

State of Alabama Launches Centralized Website for Public Works Bid Advertisements

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – The Alabama Department of Finance's Division of Real Property Management today announced the launch of a new centralized website – https://alabamabuilds.gov – designed to modernize the way sealed bid opportunities for public works projects are posted and accessed.

The new platform, established under ACT 2025-383, provides a single, electronic location for Awarding Authorities to post official Notices of Advertisement for sealed bids, effective October 1, 2025. While the statutory requirement to advertise in newspapers remains in place when available, this digital resource makes it easier for contractors, architects, engineers, and the general public to stay informed.

"This centralized system will streamline the procurement process, provide consistent access to information, and ensure compliance with Alabama's Public Works law," said **Mickey Allen**, Assistant Finance Director, RPM. "By increasing visibility of advertisements, we expect more competition among qualified contractors, which will drive lower bids and ultimately reduce costs for public works projects."

Key features of the website include:

- **Daily Updates:** Anyone may sign up to receive email notifications of new bid postings added within the previous 24 hours.
- **Low-Cost Access:** Awarding Authorities may publish advertisements for a $25 posting fee.
- **Future Enhancements:** The site will soon expand to include bid results and project completion notices, further enhancing public accountability.

"This is an important step forward for transparency and efficiency in state government," said Finance Director **Bill Poole**. "By centralizing bid postings in one public location, we are ensuring equal access to information, reducing administrative burdens, and providing taxpayers with a clearer view of how their dollars are being invested in infrastructure and public facilities."

For more information, visit https://alabamabuilds.gov or contact the Division of Construction Management at (334) 242-4082 or alabamabuilds@rpm.alabama.gov.

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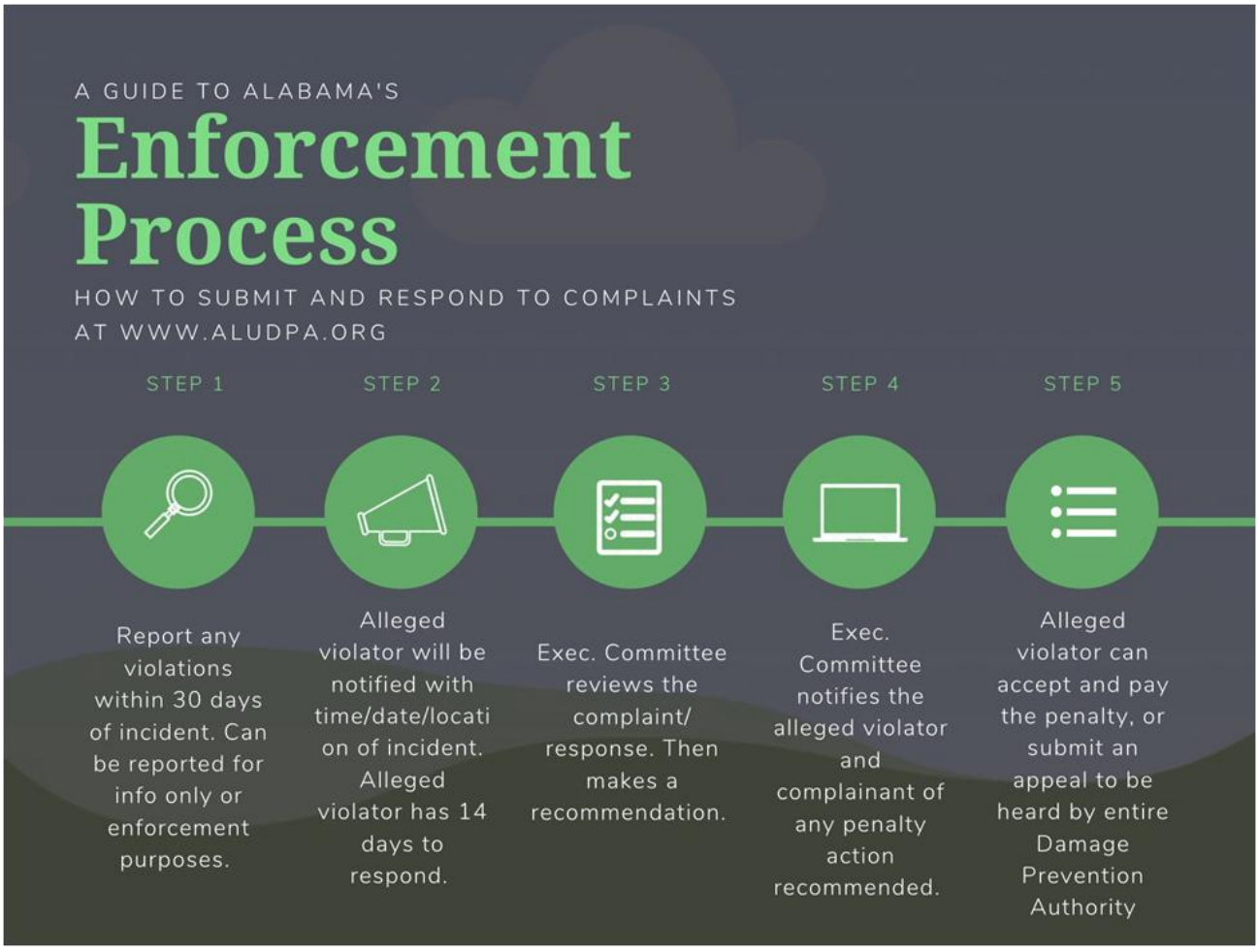
News & Notes:

Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Authority (ALUDPA)

The Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Authority (ALUDPA) was established for the purpose of enforcing the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention State Law, for reviewing penalty provisions, and for reviewing the adequacy of the Alabama State Law Enforcement Program.

The Enforcement Program is a complaint-driven process where a complaint may be submitted against an entity for violation of the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention State Law. A complaint may be submitted as information only and not designated for enforcement penalties.

A complaint may be submitted using the Complaint Form at this Website no later than 30 days after the occurrence of an alleged violation. The submitted Complaint Form is reviewed by the ALUDPA for determination of an alleged violation and for penalty provisions that may apply. The reported violator is then notified by the ALUDPA that a response may be submitted using the Response Form at this Website no later than 14 days after the ALUDPA notification.



Grants Available Now

Let CICT Help Fund Your Craft Training Program

If you currently offer or would like to provide craft training within the commercial construction industry, you're eligible to apply for grants from the **Alabama Construction Industry Craft Training** (CICT) Board. These grants include funding for contractors' in-house training programs. In the fiscal year 2023, CICT awarded over $5 million, which helped fund training for more than 4,000 students across 93 training programs.

Types of Grants:

CICT grants are reimbursable grants and applications may be submitted at any time.

1. Craft/Apprenticeship Training Grant
- Up to $100,000 per trade.
- Skills/craft tied to a specific trade.

2. Task Grant
- Up to $15,000.
- Short-term/seminar-type training.

Eligible Training Providers:

- Alabama commercial construction business, for-profit and not-for-profit.
- 2-year and 4-year accredited postsecondary institution recognized by SACS.
- K-12 education entity recognized by the Alabama State Department of Education.
- Trade union.
- Other related entities approved by the board.

GO BUILD + ALABAMA CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CRAFT TRAINING

Go Build Alabama connects training programs awarded by CICT to career-seekers interested in the skilled trades. Together, Go Build Alabama and CICT can help build a qualified workforce that meets Alabama's growing demand for skilled construction workers.

Apply for funding now at alcict.com

The mission of the Alabama Construction Recruitment Institute and the Go Build Alabama campaign is to recruit a new generation of skilled tradespeople for the commercial and industrial construction industry, by creating a recruitment campaign that dispels the misperceptions about working in the trades, promotes training programs, and enhances the image of the construction trade professional and the industry as a whole.

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

AUCA Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, December 4, 2025

AUCA 2026 Spring General Meeting, Golf Tournament and Shrimp & Crawfish Boil
Thursday, April 23, 2026
Arrowhead Country Club
Montgomery, AL

AUCA 2026 Fall General Meeting & Sporting Clay Shoot
Thursday, October 15, 2026
Lower Wetumpka Shotgun Sports Club
Montgomery, AL

Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

From Kyle England - Chairman CWCC & Ted Mondloch - Current Strategies

November 2025 Report

Shutdown Resolution and Outlook for FY2026 Appropriations

After 43 days of stalled negotiations and repeated failed votes in both chambers, congressional leaders ultimately reached an agreement in early November to end what became the longest government shutdown in U.S. history. While details of the agreement emerged gradually over the first week of the month, the final deal included a revised continuing resolution (CR), pushing the federal funding deadline into January and creating a pathway for bipartisan work on full-year FY26 appropriations legislation.

As pressure mounted from multiple fronts, including growing travel disruptions, the risk of halted nutrition benefits, and over two million federal personnel missing paychecks, Senate negotiators accelerated efforts to finalize a framework for reopening the government. Over the weekend prior to the deal, a bipartisan group of Senators met to negotiate the contours of the new CR, outline expectations for how full-year appropriations bills will move, and to commit to a Senate vote to extend the Affordable Care Act enhanced tax credits that had been so central to the impasse.

The Senate passed the bill on November 10, with the House following suit on November 12, and President Trump signing the agreement into law that same evening.

Direct impacts to water infrastructure funding were limited throughout the shutdown. The majority of FY25 allocations for the SRF programs had already been distributed to states before the lapse in federal funding. The primary exception to this is the FY25 Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) funding ($3 billion nationally), which remains delayed as EPA finalizes its state allotment formulas. The EPA Office of Water (OW) staff have indicated to Current Strategies that this funding is now likely to be announced very soon, likely in the next couple of weeks.

The shutdown's conclusion provides much-needed clarity on the path forward in Congress, renewing hopes for a return to some semblance of regular order, which has been notably absent throughout the 119th Congress. In the months ahead, Congress must decide how it will advance the remaining FY26 appropriations measures. Senior appropriators in both chambers have signaled interest in moving the EPA spending bill prior to the next government funding deadline on January 30. Current Strategies continues to engage with key committee and personal office staff to ensure our funding priorities remain visible as these decisions take shape.

EPA Water Program Renewals Legislation

With government funding restored, key committees are turning their attention to EPA water program legislation. This is the effort to reauthorize wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water programs that were most recently addressed under the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and are set to expire after FY26.

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Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

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The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is tentatively scheduled to hold a legislative markup on December 10 to begin its consideration of legislation to renew EPA water infrastructure programs, marking the first formal step in the process. The House Energy and Commerce Committee and Senate Environment and Public Works Committee are expected to follow suit and release their initial proposals for the legislation in early 2026.

CWCC is actively engaging with this process. Last month, the coalition signed on to a national letter led by the American Public Works Association (APWA) urging Congress to reauthorize EPA water infrastructure programs at increased funding levels. Current Strategies has also drafted an individual CWCC letter outlining the coalition's priorities for the bill. Once the letter is finalized, we will provide template outreach materials that members can use to engage their own congressional delegations. Direct contact from constituents/constituent organizations remains one of the most effective forms of advocacy, and we will aim to leverage this measure more frequently as the legislation moves forward.

Senate Hearing on PFAS Remediation

On Wednesday, November 19, the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee held a hearing on PFAS cleanup and disposal policy. The discussion largely focused on assessing the latest innovations in PFAS destruction and landfilling, and what actions EPA and Congress can take to adequately resource stakeholders to make progress on PFAS contamination efforts. The discussion also focused on liability protections for "passive receivers" of PFAS contamination, including water utilities, and the merits of providing blanked protections versus targeted exemptions from litigation under CERCLA.

EPA Regulatory and Programmatic Developments

Lead Service Line Replacement Funding

As noted above, the delayed FY25 LSLR funding is expected to be released to states soon now that EPA can resume normal operations. This $3 billion investment will support planning and construction for lead pipe removal across the country.

PFAS and Lead and Copper Rule (LCRI) Updates

There were no major regulatory decisions issued in the past month; however, EPA continues to work on updates to key drinking water regulations that will drive significant infrastructure needs:

- PFAS Regulation (National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for PFAS):
  EPA is continuing preparations for a rulemaking to implement changes announced earlier this year, including maintaining maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for PFOA and PFOS, while reconsidering the regulatory path for four additional PFAS compounds. A formal rulemaking proposal is expected in early 2026.

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Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

(Continued from page 10)

- Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI):
  The rule finalized in December 2024 remains in place, requiring full lead service line replacement. Industry groups, including AWWA, have challenged the rule in the D.C. Circuit. For much of 2025, that case was in abeyance while the new administration decided what to do. The Trump EPA has now said it will defend the core rule—including the 10-year replacement requirement—and the court has restarted the litigation. EPA has signaled interest in introducing additional flexibilities rather than reopening the rule entirely. No further updates have been released this month.

Current Strategies will continue to monitor these regulatory actions, as both rules will have major implications for local planning, cost projections, and funding strategies across the utility sector.

Water Week 2026

Current Strategies and CWCC are beginning preparations for Water Week 2026, scheduled for the week of April 13, 2026. As discussed on recent coalition calls, we are planning a more robust in-person presence in Washington, DC, this year.

Schedule at a glance:

- Tuesday, April 14:
  Optional attendance of the National Water Policy Fly-In, hosted by national water utility trade associations downtown. This event will be a half-day of afternoon programming, including keynote remarks and panel discussions, as well as networking time between sessions and an evening happy hour. CWCC is not an official partner to this event, but coalition members are encouraged to register and attend if they are able to be in town by Tuesday. The UTCA NJ team and Current Strategies will be there.

- Wednesday, April 15:
  A full afternoon of coalition programming, including guest speakers from federal agencies and congressional offices, as well as a presentation on best practices for effective Hill meetings.

- Thursday, April 16:
  A full day of congressional meetings on Capitol Hill. Current Strategies will coordinate scheduling for participating members.

A "Save the Date" flyer will be circulated shortly, and registration information containing more specific logistics will follow. We encourage interested members to let us know early, as attendance projections will determine which rooms we reserve and which speakers we can secure.

cleanwaterconstructioncoalition.org

Health & Safety:

Provided by Marsh McLennan Agency - Southeast Risk Control Services

Stay Focused on Safety During the Holiday Season

During the holidays, many of us will attend celebrations with family and friends or schedule travel or last minute shopping. These festivities, however, can also bring distractions and stress.

According to the American Psychological Association, stress increases as we prepare to meet the "holiday rush." It's a common statistic that people preparing for a big event (holiday, vacation, wedding, etc.) are more prone to injury. Why? Because their minds are not focused on the task at hand; instead they are focused on another event. Our attention can be diverted, or we may unintentionally expose ourselves to potential risks on or off the job.

As the year draws to a close, all of us need to take proactive steps to stay focused on our own safety and the safety of colleagues. Despite all the potential distractions, we need to be sure we keep our "head in the game." We can begin by understanding how stress can distort our perceptions and by taking the following steps to understand and manage our reaction to stress.

1. Awareness is the first step in reducing stress. It's easy to let your mind multi-task while your hands and legs are in "auto pilot" doing the work. But, you must resist the urge to think of other things and instead fully concentrate on the task at hand. No matter the activity, you must focus, be precise in your work, and be aware of your surroundings.
2. Recognize when you begin to feel "weighted" or uneasy, and identify the stressors or triggering events. External stress is often caused by something you feel you can't control, but internal stress is highly manageable. You can control how you react to stress. If you find yourself becoming distracted, stop and reframe your thoughts to focus on the task at hand.
3. Be realistic in what you can accomplish during the holidays or any stressful event. Set achievable goals, and then take small, decisive steps toward those goals.
4. Keep things in perspective. Adopt a long-term view to avoid "blowing things out of proportion."

Safety is for all of us – our co-workers, our families and our friends. You can help keep your holiday happy and safe by choosing to manage your stress and to stay mentally focused.

Have a safe and wonderful holiday season!

PROTECT WORKERS IN TRENCHES

Prevent trench collapses and save lives:

SLOPE or bench trench walls,

SHORE trench walls with supports, or

SHIELD trench walls with trench boxes

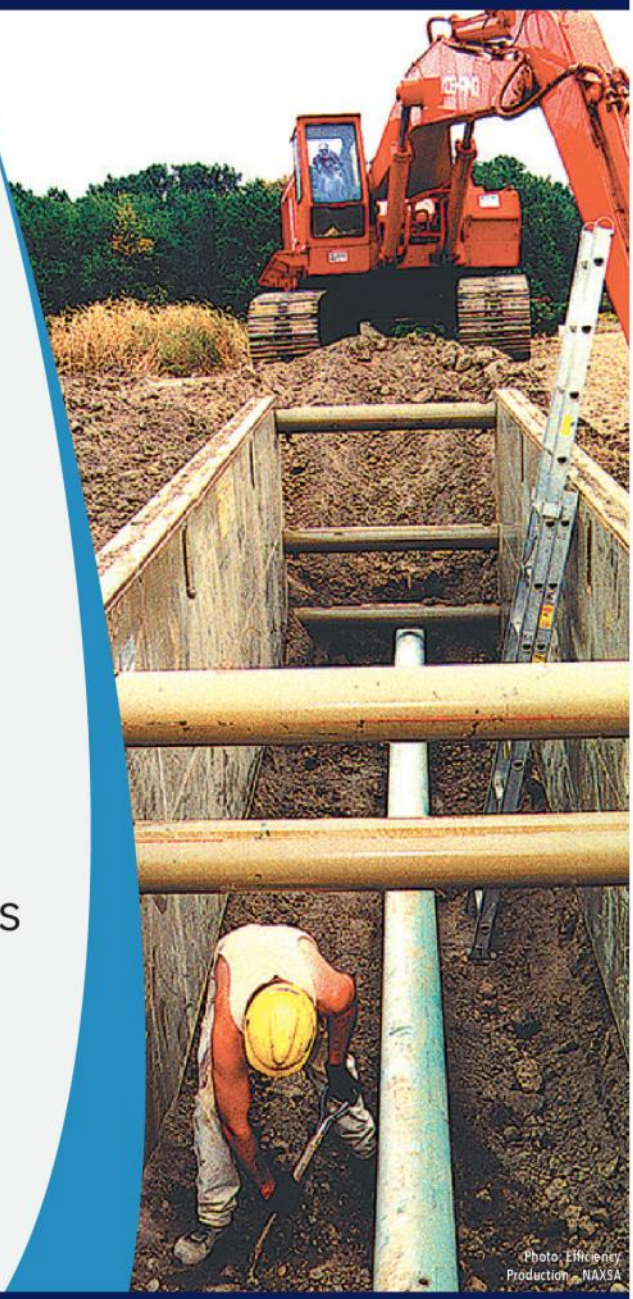

Photo: Efficiency Production - NAXSA

U.S. Department of Labor

OSHA
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

WWW.OSHA.GOV/TRENCHING • 800-321-OSHA (6742) • TTY 877-889-5627

OSHA 3215-06R 2018

OSHA FactSheet

Confined Spaces in Construction: Sewer Systems

Confined spaces can present conditions that are immediately dangerous to workers if such conditions are not properly identified, evaluated, tested, and controlled. This fact sheet highlights many of the confined space hazards associated with sewer systems and how employers can protect workers in these environments.

OSHA has developed a new construction standard for Confined Spaces (29 CFR 1926 Subpart AA)—any space that meets the following three criteria:

- Is large enough for a worker to enter it;
- Has limited means of entry or exit; and
- Is not designed for continuous occupancy.

A space may also be a **permit-required** confined space if it has a hazardous atmosphere, the potential for engulfment or suffocation, a layout that might trap a worker through converging walls or a sloped floor, or any other serious safety or health hazard.

Fatal Incidents

Confined space hazards in sewer systems have led to worker deaths. Several tragic incidents in sewers have included:

- A worker who lost consciousness and died when he climbed into a sewer vault to retrieve a tool. His co-worker also died when he attempted a rescue.
- While repairing a natural gas leak, a worker entered a drainage pipe to retrieve survey equipment. The natural gas ignited, killing the worker.

Training

The new Confined Spaces standard requires employers to ensure that their workers know about the existence, location, and dangers posed by each permit-required confined space, and that they may not enter such spaces without authorization.

Employers must train workers involved in permit-required confined space operations so that they can perform their duties safely and understand the hazards in permit spaces and the methods used to isolate, control or protect workers. Workers not authorized to perform entry rescues must be trained on the dangers of attempting such rescues.

Safe Entry Requirements

The new Confined Spaces standard includes several requirements for safe entry.

Preparation: Before workers can enter a confined space, employers must provide pre-entry planning. This includes:

- Having a competent person evaluate the work site for the presence of confined spaces, including permit-required confined spaces.
- Once the space is classified as a permit-required confined space, identifying the means of entry and exit, proper ventilation methods, and elimination or control of all potential hazards in the space.
- Ensuring that the air in a confined space is tested, before workers enter, for oxygen levels, flammable and toxic substances, and stratified atmospheres.
- If a permit is required for the space, removing or controlling hazards in the space and determining rescue procedures and necessary equipment.
- If the air in a space is not safe for workers, ventilating or using whatever controls or protections are necessary so that employees can safely work in the space.

Ongoing practices: After pre-entry planning, employers must ensure that the space is monitored for hazards, especially atmospheric hazards. Effective communication is important because there can be multiple contractors operating on a site, each with its own workers needing to enter the confined space. Attendants outside confined spaces must make sure that unauthorized workers do not enter them. Rescue attempts by untrained personnel can lead to multiple deaths.

Confined Spaces in Sewer Systems

Types of sewer systems include sanitary (domestic sewage), storm (runoff), and combined (domestic sewage and runoff). Sewer systems are extensive

and include many different components that are considered confined spaces, including pipelines, manholes, wet wells, dry well vaults, and lift/pump stations. Therefore, employers conducting work in sewer systems will likely have workers who will encounter confined spaces.

Sewer systems also consist of wastewater treatment plants, where confined spaces include digestion and sedimentation tanks, floating covers over tanks, sodium hypochlorite tanks, and wastewater holding tanks, among others. Many of these components may also qualify as permit-required confined spaces.

Employers must take all necessary steps to keep workers safe in confined spaces, including following the OSHA Construction Confined Spaces standard. This standard applies to both new construction within an existing sewer and alterations and/or upgrades. For example:

- Installing or upgrading a manhole.
- Altering or upgrading sewer lines.
- Making nonstructural upgrades to joints, pipes, or manholes.
- Demolition work.
- Installing new or upgraded pump equipment, cables, wires, or junction boxes.

Construction work can create confined spaces, even if there are none at the start of a project. Changes to the entry/exit, the ease of exit, and air flow could produce a confined space or cause one to become permit-required.

Hazards Associated with Sewer Systems

Sewer systems can present a host of confined space hazards, including:

- Atmospheric hazards (low oxygen, toxic or flammable gases).
- Chemicals in piping and from roadway runoff (may harm lungs, skin, or eyes).
- Engulfment and drowning.
- Electrocution (e.g., using electrical equipment in wet working conditions).
- Slips, trips, and falls.
- Falling objects.
- High noise levels, low visibility, limits to communication, and long distances to exits.

Personal protective equipment: Employers should assess the work site to determine what personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed to protect workers. Employers should provide workers with the required PPE and proper training on its use and about any related hazards before the work starts.

How to Contact OSHA

For questions or to get information or advice, to find out how to contact OSHA's free on-site consultation program, order publications, report a fatality or severe injury, or to file a confidential complaint, visit www.osha.gov or call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742).

Additional Information

OSHA's Confined Spaces in Construction standard (29 CFR 1926 Subpart AA)

Confined Spaces: OSHA Construction Industry Topics by Standard

OSHA Fact Sheet: Procedures for Atmospheric Testing in Confined Spaces

Confined Spaces: NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topics Page

State Plan Guidance: States with OSHA-approved state plans may have additional requirements for confined space safety.

Help for Small and Medium-Sized Employers: OSHA's On-site Consultation Program offers free and confidential advice to businesses nationwide.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: 1-877-889-5627.

OSHA® Occupational Safety and Health Administration

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AUCA IS A MEMBER-DRIVEN, NEEDS FOCUSED TRADE ASSOCIATION CREATED SOLELY TO PROMOTE AND ADVANCE THE UTILITY INDUSTRY IN THE STATE OF ALABAMA.

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