

Safety Resources for B.C. Egg Farmers and Producers

Understanding how to work in and around confined spaces can save your life. That's an important message for B.C. farmers. While workplace injuries in agricultural confined spaces are rare, if they occur they can be serious and fatal.

In 2002, two Okanagan winemakers died in a wine fermentation tank. Six years later, on a Langley mushroom farm, three men died while working in a pump shed; another two suffered devastating injuries.

Every one of those deaths was preventable.

What is a confined space?

A confined space is an enclosed or partially enclosed area that's big enough for a worker to enter. It may be enclosed on all sides, or on as few as two sides. On an egg farm, confined spaces may be present in well pits, valve chambers, and storm water manholes.

Because of the various hazards contained within these types of spaces, confined spaces are not designed for someone to work in regularly. They're places where entry may be needed from time to time for inspection, cleaning, maintenance, or repair and should be properly assessed before any entry.

Easy-to-read resources

Previous incidents involving confined spaces are sober reminders of why it's important your workers have proper knowledge of potential hazards and safe work procedures.

This is why WorkSafeBC has partnered with the industry to create a series of resources to give you the tools you need to keep everyone safe. With help from the Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association (FARSHA), we've developed a series of booklets to raise awareness about best practices for working safely around confined spaces in agriculture.

"The booklets are customized for your particular type of business, and provide practical information for you, your supervisors, and your workers," says Ian Munroe, WorkSafeBC's Vice-President of Employer, Industry, and Worker Services. "I encourage you to read them and share them with your employees, so that together, we can ensure you — and each and every one of your employees — go home safe at the end of the day."

What you'll find in the booklets

These easy-to-read resources correspond to different farm and business types and include helpful information such as:

- How to identify and confined space
- How to conduct an inventory of the confined spaces on your farm
- How to get proper training

You'll also find information and checklist to help you identify confined spaces, typical hazards, and training resources, as well as peel-and-stick safety signs you can post around your workplace to alert workers to confined spaces.

The booklets have been distributed to all farms in B.C., as well as posted on worksafebc.com/agriculture, where you can find regulations and guidelines, case studies, and images on confined spaces. Our field officers will also have many resources available and be able to answer any questions you may have about the safety of confined spaces.

More information

FARSHA will be offering free information sessions to help you and your workers better understand the importance of safety in confined spaces. Contact your local FARSHA safety consultant for more information at farsha.bc.ca.

For more information on the confined space in agriculture initiative or to download additional booklets, please visit the Safety at Work centre for agriculture at worksafebc.com/agriculture.

