

Inspection Chambers Above Fuel Storage Tanks

◆OC 288/5

Target Audience:

Factory Inspectors
FCG Specialist Inspectors (Occupational Hygiene)

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SUMMARY

Inspection or manhole chambers above underground petroleum fuel storage tanks at petrol filling stations contain metering equipment, fill and dip pipes and a variety of valves and connectors. Access to these confined spaces is made by specialist companies during the examination, maintenance and repair of this equipment. Following a fatality a contractors association have produced a Code of Practice

Background

1 In 1990 an engineer died in an inspection chamber at a filling station where the enforcement of HSW Act fell to the local authority. At a subsequent Crown Court hearing the specialist company concerned, -> , ¹ were fined £15,000 for breach of HSW Act s.2 for not following the conditions in HSE Guidance Note GS 5, *Entry into confined spaces*, (file 288).

2 HSE became involved through a Head Office visit to -> ² as a result of a complaint about general working conditions for such work..

Code of practice

3 Following the fatality a number of major contractors involved in the work formed themselves into an Association of Forecourt Systems Contractors and HSE was consulted during the preparation of the Association's Code of Practice.

4 The Code divides inspection chambers into 3 categories depending upon depth and interprets the requirements of HSE Guidance Note GS 5 for each type of chamber. The Code requires:

- (1) effective training and supervision;
- (2) adequate ventilation of the chamber, mechanically where necessary;
- (3) adequate training and monitoring of the atmosphere in the chamber, particularly for hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and oxygen;
- (4) the attendance of a second person with suitable rescue equipment where appropriate.

¹ Exemption 15 - Statutory and other restrictions (Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, s.28)

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5 Local Authority Inspectors received the above advice in the form of HELA Circular, LAC(A)3/1/7.

6 The Association of Forecourt Systems Contractors' *Code of Practice for Contractors Working in Manholes on Petrol Filling Station Forecourts* is available from the Secretary, Association of Forecourt Systems Contractors, PO Box 64, Banstead, Surrey SM7 2QH (Tel: 0737 352766).

7. A list of members of the Association is given in the appendix.

Cancellation of instructions

8 NIGM 10B/1991/15 - Cancel and destroy.

11 October 1993

(FOD/1251/1993)

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ASI headings

Confined spaces: local authorities: petroleum: storage tanks.

APPENDIX IS CLOSED

