Winery Confined Spaces Stats and Facts



FACTS

1. Confined spaces are defined as en – closed or partially enclosed areas with restrictive means of entry. In the wine industry these consist mainly of storage and fermentation tanks.
2. The hemo – globin saturation and the oxygen content of blood can decline very rapidly at low atmospheric oxygen concentrations. Entry into these areas without adequate respiratory protection, including supplied air, can result in rapid hypoxemia with decreased exercise capacity and mentation ability. Loss of consciousness, apnea, and cardiac standstill can occur quickly in an atmosphere of less than 6% oxygen.
3. Wine production workers face health risks working in confined spaces with low oxygen and high carbon dioxide levels—can cause death.
4. Winemakers and wine tasters may suffer significant dental erosions and sensitivity as a result of the acidic nature of the wines they need to taste numerous times a day. This problem can seriously affect their ability to practise their profession.
5. Most accidents involving confined space occur when the wine or the grape must be sampled or removed from the tank and during emptying and cleaning.

STATS

- The unlikely-sounding scenario actually happened in September 2018, when a fermentation tank spewed 8,000 gallons of prosecco.
- Many winery workers are injured and killed each year while working in confined spaces. An estimated 60% of the fatalities have been among the would-be rescuers.
- A worker at Corus Estates & Vineyards LLC, also known as 12th & Maple Wine Co., was found unresponsive Feb. 1 in an empty 30,000-gallon wine tank.
- 7 workers die in Confined Space Accident at Corona Winery. This confined space incident has the largest loss of life in one entry that I am aware of. While it is not uncommon to lose 2-3 workers, this incident claimed the lives of 7 workers.
- A winery worker in the Sonoma Valley died while cleaning a tank. The owner and a winemaker at a winery in Vancouver, B.C. died when the owner fell in while bending over the top; the winemaker fell in trying to pull him out.