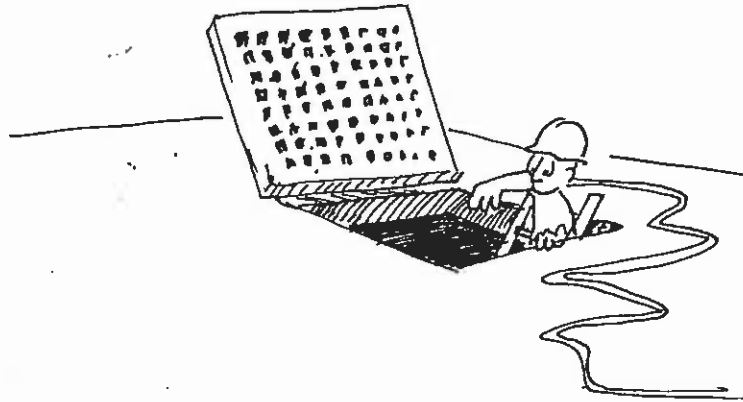
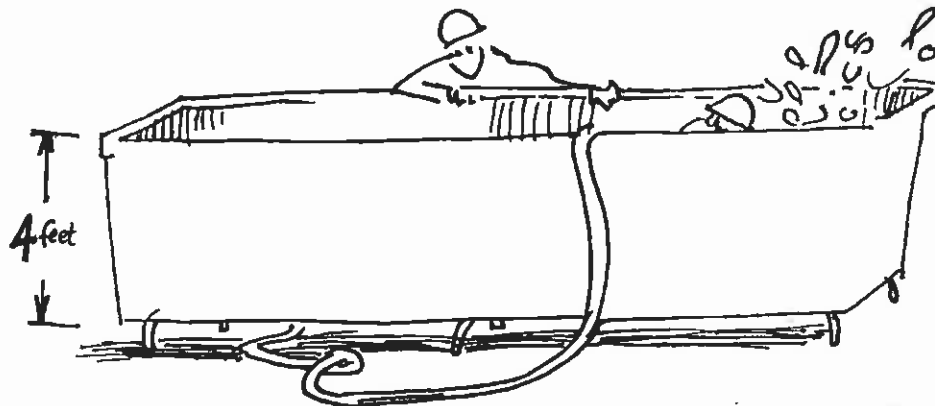


Confined Space Hazards in the Sanitation Shift

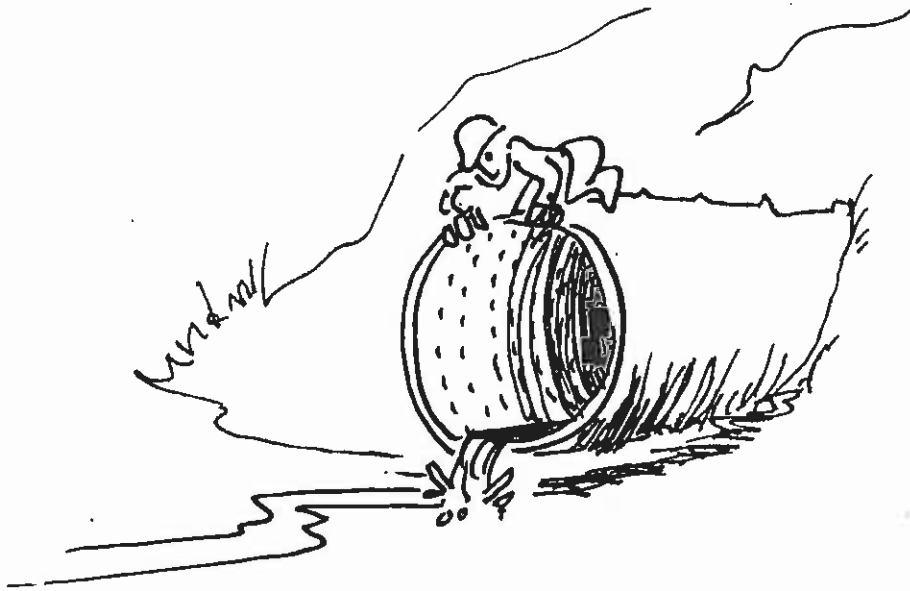


"Confined Space" is a workspace that is large enough to enter into to do work, but has limited entrance and exit.

There are many examples of a confined space. According to OSHA, "Confined or Enclosed spaces include, but are not limited to, storage tanks, process vessels, bins, boilers... underground utility vaults, tunnels, pipelines, and open top spaces more than 4 feet in depth such as pits, tubs, vaults, and vessels"



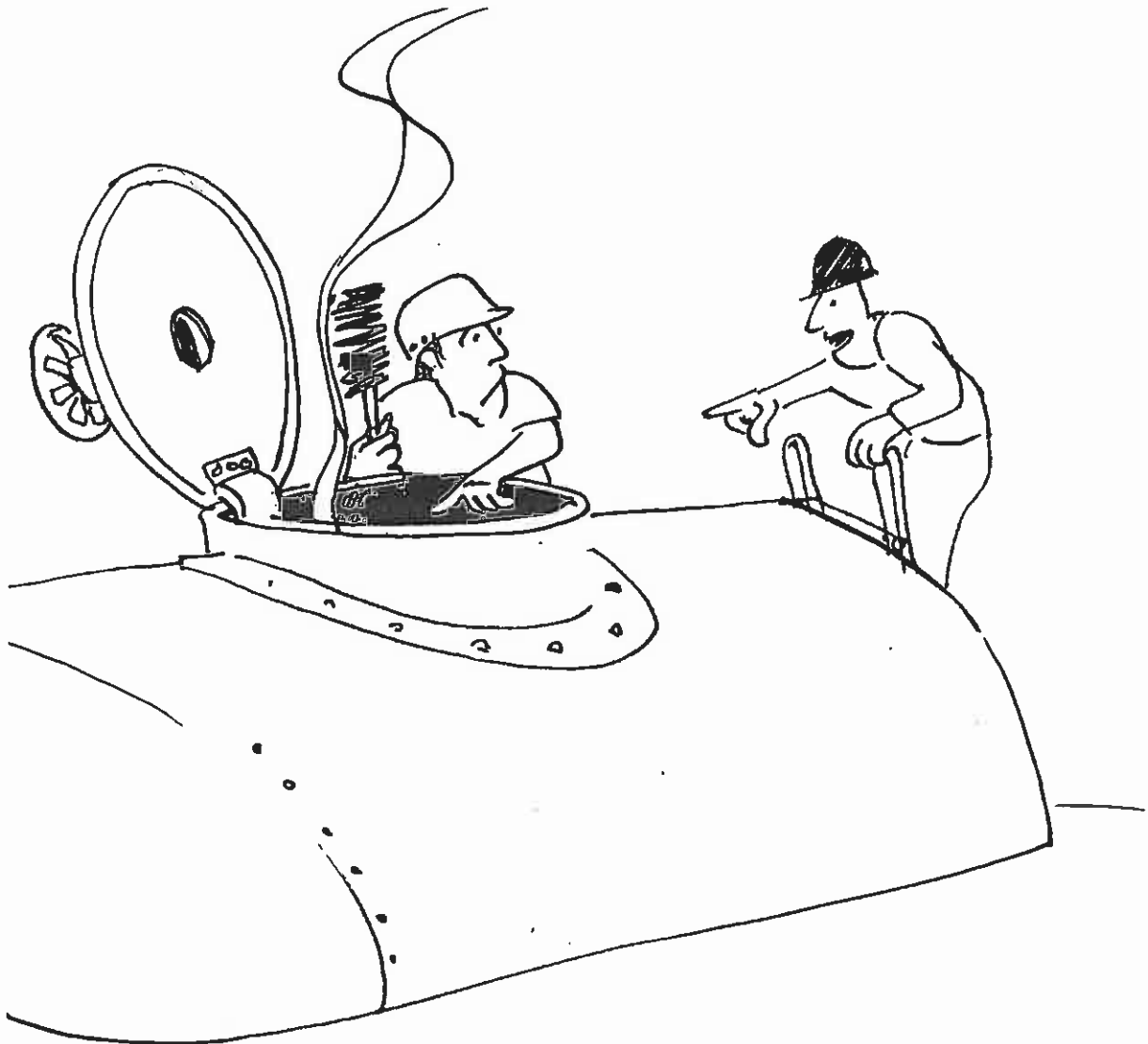
Sanitation workers are sometimes told to enter confined spaces to clean. There are a number of special hazards of work in confined space, and these can cause **serious injury or death**, by suffocation, asphyxiation, crushing or in other ways.



In OSHA Standard 1926.21(b)(6)(i), there are specific rules about confined space. "...All employees required to enter into confined or enclosed spaces **shall be instructed** as to the nature of all hazards involved, the necessary precautions to be taken, and in the use of protective and emergency equipment required..."

Permit-required confined spaces include even more hazards. For a space to be a “permit-required confined space” one or more of the following must apply to that space:

1. Contains or has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere,
2. Contains a material that has the potential for engulfing the entrant,
3. Has an internal configuration that might cause an entrant to be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or by a floor that slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross section, and/or
4. Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazards.



Just like any training they receive, confined space training should be given in language all workers can understand.



Workers have several tools that can be used to make the workplace safer. The most powerful tool that workers have is their union and the members coming together to work on making the workplace safer. Participating in a safety and health committee, both a union only committee and a joint labor committee can identify the hazards facing sanitation workers and identify how to eliminate the hazards so that workers can work in safer conditions.

Workers in a union workplace also have their union contract. Many unions have included health and safety language in their collective bargaining agreements. This is a strong tool for addressing and fixing workplace safety and health issues.

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