Confined space safety talk

In the oil and gas industry there are times when a worker may be required to enter a confined space. This includes but is not limited to storage tanks, pits, excavations and working in areas around the rig. Along with the hazard of possible ignition of flammable sources, there are health hazards that can be related to confined spaces as well. This includes suffocation and exposure to harmful chemicals.

*There are 3 main elements of a confined space which are:*

* Is the space large enough for an employee to enter and perform work?
* The opening is restricted for entry and exit
* The space is not intended for continuous worker occupancy

*Areas to consider when working in a confined space:*

* Testing the atmosphere is a key step to ensure that the area is safe for entrance. All areas of the space should be tested, not just at the opening.
* Ventilation should be considered as well when there is a problem being corrected. Forced air should be provided continuously when possible and the confined space retested before entering.
* Isolating the area is another important step. Locking out all energy in connection with the space such as electrical, pneumatic, mechanical, and shutoff valves.
* Know the necessary personal protective equipment to be worn for entering the confined space such as air-purifying respirators to filter the substance, or if needed an air-supplying respirator to deliver a safe supply of air.
* Know the requirements for permit required and non-permit required confined space. Determine if a permit is necessary for the confined space that work will be performed in.
* Have appropriate stand by and rescue available when work is being performed in a confined space. Know the emergency response procedures and have appropriate personal protective equipment available for rescue personnel.
* All employees who enter the confined space as well as outside attendants should be trained on confined spaces prior to entering.