# Safety in Shutdowns & Turnarounds: High Risk Periods Need High Focus Fatality File



## US Department of Labor investigation of worker’s confined space fatality finds Oklahoma City-area contractor ignored federal safety measures

**What Happened**

In September 2023, a 30-year-old worker died of fatal asphyxiation after entering a permit-required confined space to repair a leaking valve inside a production water tank at a McClain County, Oklahoma wellsite. The worker lost consciousness inside the tank. Two coworkers entered in a rescue attempt and were also overcome by the oxygen-deficient atmosphere – both survived, but the original worker did not.

**What Went Wrong**

OSHA found that C&M Roustabout Services LLC failed on every critical level – no atmospheric testing, no confined space entry permit, no protective systems, and no rescue plan. The employer sent a worker into a tank without evaluating it for hazardous conditions of any kind. OSHA cited the company for serious violations of federal confined space regulations.

**The Bottom Line**

This worker entered a confined space for what appeared to be a routine maintenance repair. No one tested the air. No permit was issued. By the time he lost consciousness, self-rescue was already impossible. Every confined space entry during a shutdown or maintenance period requires atmospheric testing, a valid permit, and a trained attendant outside – before anyone steps in.

**Source:** https://www.osha.gov/