

# Emergency Bin Entry

FORMER GEAPS PRESIDENT OFFERS THOUGHTS ON BIN ENTRY AND RESCUE ISSUES

By Wayne Bauer

From time to time, I still hear people arguing about the differences or technicalities between “confined space permit-required” situations vs. “bin entry.”

There are a number of issues that we must address in order to comply with OSHA’s standards for entering bins, silos, and/or permit-required confined spaces, as outlined in 29CFR 1910.272 or 1910.146.

## Engulfments Continue

Regardless of what you wish to call these spaces, the fact is that we still see

people killed every year as a result of their entrance into grain bins. These fatalities would not happen, if proper entry procedures and safe work practices were followed.

Quick and effective response such as immediately shutting off the grain flow and taking other actions to prevent the worker from becoming fully entrapped will greatly improve the chances for survival and rescue.

Most cases of grain engulfment occur when doing the following:

1. Unloading grain from a storage structure, where the worker involved improperly entered the structure to clear blockages or take actions to assist

grain flows.

2. The worker became caught in the grain flow because of entering the drawoff area of the structure itself.

3. A worker enters into the grain structure alone, with no standby observer.

## Confined Space Entry Program

The minimum elements for a confined space entry program should include:

1. Establishing procedures for identifying hazards related to confined space entry.

2. Use of a written permit that helps ensure that all hazards are con-



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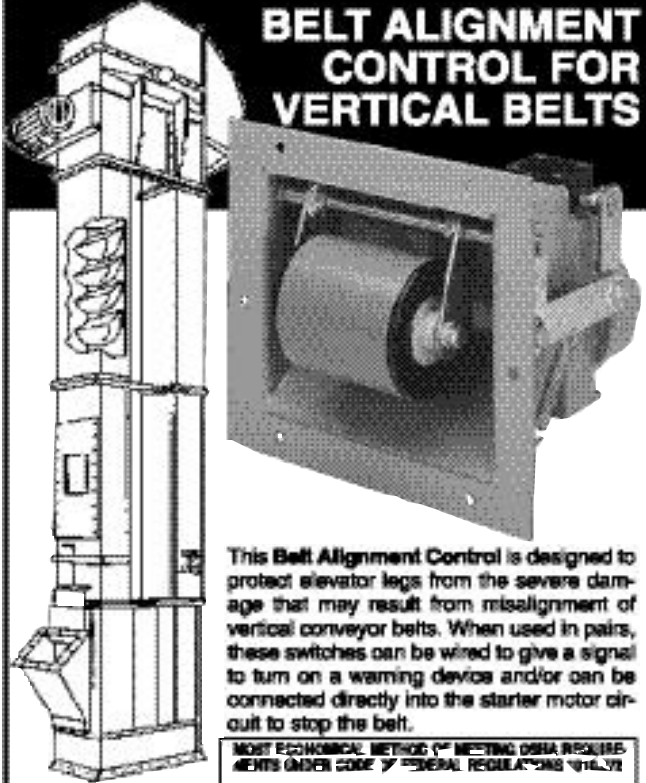


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*How to perform rescues from small confined spaces have been a topic covered at past GEAPS/SATRA bin rescue workshops. Photo by Gary Pickelmann, Star of the West Milling Co., Frankenmuth, MI.*

trolled before entry.

3. Provision for any specialized equipment that is needed.
4. Destination and training of employees as entrants, attendants, or those with the responsibility for authorizing confined space permits.
5. Development of emergency response procedures.

The vast majority of grain handling facilities have not addressed or developed a plan that could be used, should a grain engulfment and/or confined space rescue become necessary.

Regulations require the employer to provide for rescue by having your own trained responders in-house or relying upon local emergency services for such a potential rescue.

The rescuers and responders involved must practice in typical spaces that they may be involved with. Most emergency services identified for this purpose are not currently qualified or equipped to perform a rescue in this situation.

#### Bin Rescue Classes

If you need some assistance in this area or are lost as to how you would even proceed down this path in terms of evaluating your options, you may wish to consider attending one of the 24-hour bin rescue classes being offered jointly by the Grain Elevator and Processing Society (GEAPS) and the Safety and Technical Rescue Association (SATRA) this coming spring.

The classes will be held May 9-11 in Berlin, MD, and June 13-15 in Frankenmuth, MI. See page 70 or call the GEAPS office at 612-339-4644 for more details.

*Wayne Bauer is safety director at Star of the West Milling Co., Frankenmuth; 989-652-9971. In that capacity, he helped develop a bin rescue training program along with SATRA personnel that has been held for elevator employees, emergency responders, and people in other industries for several years in the Michigan Thumb region. He served as 2004-05 international president of GEAPS.*



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