

SAFETY MEMO

March 7th, 2022 – Interstitial Spaces



Did you know?

Introduction / Context

As part of our work, we may have to enter interstitial areas especially above clean production areas. For example, during preliminary visits before work, surveys, or even control/qualification after the work has been carried out.

Problems

Interstitial areas are crowded spaces with lots of obstacles. Elements such as a reduced height, the passage of ventilation ducts and pipes, and electrical cable supports entail risks of getting stuck, tripping, or collision.

The construction of cleanroom ceilings is not designed to be walkable. The areas on which it is possible to walk must be clearly demarcated. This carries a risk of falling.

During the evolution of the process and building expansions these areas are modified, and new elements may restrict and complicate access. Therefore, a good practice is to remove items that are no longer in use which then frees up space.

As these areas are not frequented by most personnel during daily work activities, there is also the risk of working alone unsupervised / disconnected for long periods of time.

Possible Consequences

Possible consequences are bumps, cuts, and sprains. In the event of a fall, the consequences can be traumatic especially if the area is low-traffic.



Mitigation

The means of mitigation possible to put in place must involve questioning the need to intervene in this area.

Complete your job hazard analysis form or other such field level hazard identification form. Some of the hazards that may be documented include:

- Working at heights
- Small space
- Tripping hazard
- Thermal: Hot or Cold
- Noise
- Poor Lighting
- Low Ceiling, Ducts
- Identify locations where it is permitted to walk safely and not the closest emergency exit pathway

Use the correct protective equipment such as

- Fall arrest system
- Bump cap
- Safety glasses
- Noise protection

Validate the appropriate emergency measures

- Emergency Exit
- First Aid Station

Ask to increase the brightness, if possible, otherwise use a flashlight.

Move slowly, taking the time to watch where you are stepping and avoid walking, standing, or leaning on the ducts.

Conclusion

Ensure you have completed your job hazard analysis for the task to be completed

Follow the working alone policies for the facility or establish a check in routine with the facility supervisor or other personnel in charge.

