Toxic substances are another danger in confined space entry and work. Many times, toxic substances can't be seen or smelled - but they can still be there.

Two ways that toxic materials can hurt you are:

- **Irritation**
  The substance may irritate your respiratory system (throat, lungs) or your nervous system. If this irritation is extreme, it can be deadly.

- **Chemical Asphyxiation**
  Some toxics can decrease the amount of oxygen you get in your lungs, keeping them from working properly.

Some common toxics that are especially dangerous in confined spaces:

- **Carbon monoxide**
- **Hydrogen sulphide**
- **Sulphur dioxide**

Because of these dangers, each time you enter a confined space, make sure you know:

- about hazardous materials that could be present.
- about hazardous materials previously contained in the space.
- the health effects from exposure.
- what levels are acceptable for entry.
- what personal protective equipment is needed.

Always check the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)