

# LEARNING FROM THE PAST, TO IMPROVE THE FUTURE.

## CONFINED SPACES

MRS TRAINING AND RESCUE

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- Case study – The Mines Rescue Service to MRS Training and Rescue.
- How did we learn from the past to improve the future?
- Training to recognised standards.
- Being trained and being competent to work in Confined Spaces.

In 1886 a Royal Commission recommended the formation of Mines Rescue Stations.

Between 1850 and 1900, 7500 people died from Mine explosions alone.

In 1902 The first Mines Rescue Station was built in Tankersley, Yorkshire, funded by the mine owners.

In 1954 The Mines and Quarries Act ensured that emergency procedures were standardised along with the provision of Mines Rescue.

In 1956 The Coal and Other Mines (Fire and Rescue) Regulations, required the provision of one rescue station per 15000 employees.

At its peak there were 46 rescue stations in the UK dedicated to keeping over a million mine workers safe.

In the 1980's the rapid decline in mining prepared the industry for privatisation.

In 1995 the ownership of the Mines Rescue Service transferred to the new coal owners. The same year, The Escape and Rescue from Mines Regulations shifted the emphasis on rescue, requiring the mines to have a plan for self-escape and rescue response of 60 minutes from the site of a mine, with rescue schemes requiring approval by the Secretary of State.

From 1986 to 1995 the coal mining industry and the Government regularly adapted the role of The Mines Rescue Service to suit the needs of the industry.

The lessons learned from tragedy prompted the adaptations.

The Mines Rescue Service went from being a **reactive** control measure, to a **proactive** one. Albeit still carrying the capacity to react should the need arise.

The mining industry rapidly declined from 1995 to 2016...

**In 2016, the last deep coal mine in the UK, located in Kellingley in Yorkshire ceased production and closed.**

**... So, what happened to The Mines Rescue Service?**

## How did we learn from the past to improve the future?

In 2016 the Mines Rescue Service changed its name to MRS Training and Rescue.

Today...

We continue to operate the largest mines rescue business in the UK, Our centres provide health and safety training and specialist rescue services for high-risk situations world-wide.

This did not happen overnight.

The work began in the mid-nineties.

A high proportion of the emergency response requests were due to the failure of explosion proof seals. These were installed in mineral exhausted areas of the mine to seal them off as they would naturally fill up with both toxic, poisonous, and explosive gases when the remaining coal was exposed to the atmosphere.

The Mines Rescue would normally carry out the sealing work post emergency. However, it was decided that rather than train miners to seal, The Mines Rescue would do the work, to ensure that the expertise was properly used and ensure that the seals were constructed and installed to the highest possible standard. Thus, switching from being **reactive**, to **proactive** and reducing the amount of emergency calls allowing production to stay on track.

## How did we learn from the past to improve the future?

Another example...

The Mines rescue Service always provided training to Mines Rescue Staff. In 1996 this was expanded to include first aid training.

We provided the training; however, the assessment was carried out by an independent practitioner carrying a nursing qualification as a minimum.

Until...

**A nurse started failing everyone.**

On questioning the nurse as to why this was happening it was determined that it was the assessor that was out of date.

The solution was solved by MRS approaching a recognised awarding body, and we put in place qualified and competent assessors along with a robust system of quality assurance.

**This was the first step in MRS becoming a leader in standards-based training and assessment taking the lead in high-risk industrial processes such as confined space and working at height.**

How did we learn from the past to improve the future?

This was further developed when the HSE approached MRS to qualify and deem competent Mine Supervisors.

MRS agreed to this, providing it was achieved using National Occupational Standards (NOS) and quality assurance through an awarding body.

This standards-based training was so successful in ensuring competency was valid, measurable, sufficient, reliable and consistent that National Occupational Standards were developed for every deep mine job description.

**Built into every National Occupational Standard was the principle that a worker should be competent to be productive, healthy and safe.**

MRS Training and Rescue are an example of where lessons learnt from the past helped the organisation and the industries, we support improve competency, training and ultimately the safety of the workforce.

Training to recognised standards.

Confined Space Training as an example.



**NOS**  
**NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS**



## 8 recognised standards for confined space work.

1. Work as a member of a rescue and recovery team in confined spaces.
2. Direct emergency rescue and recovery of casualties from a confined space.
3. Plan, manage and review legislative and safety compliance for work in confined spaces.
4. Supervise teams undertaking work in confined spaces.
5. Control entry and arrangements for confined spaces.
6. Work in high risk confined spaces.
7. Work in medium risk confined spaces.
8. Work in low risk confined spaces.

The standards are produced by industry and hazard experts and set out knowledge and performance criteria for each identified job role.

Assessment criteria is then based against these standards, where a delegate provides evidence that they can demonstrate how to do something (Practical) and understand they theory (Written Test).

What are the benefits of training to recognised standards?

Consistency.

Reliability.

Measurable.

Valid.

Sufficient.



What is the difference?

Training is just **one** of the building blocks of competence... it is not the building.

Competence is the correct mixture of:

- Skill
- Knowledge
- Attitude
- Training
- Experience

The competent person knows, when they do not know.

# Thank You.