

## **Can You Make the Right Decision in a Confined Space Emergency?**

On the morning of October 3, 2005 at approximately 11:30 a.m., an employee for Gaskins Surveying Company was staking a project for the Seven Hills Subdivision job site. The employee needed a measurement inside a manhole and proceeded to uncover and enter the 17' deep structure. He entered the manhole alone as a second Gaskins employee served as the survey rod man close by. The Gaskins employee failed to test the air inside the manhole before entering and traveled the entire 17' to retrieve the measurement he needed.

As he made his way back up the manhole, he passed out and fell quite a distance to the bottom of the 17' underground structure. The second Gaskins employee alerted another Gaskins employee about the accident immediately. The third Gaskins employee alerted Brandon Benefield of Strack, Inc. who was working near by. They rushed to the scene! Mindful of the situation, Brandon ordered some fellow Strack employees to set up the fresh air blower and to have a rope in place for a recovery once the air was safe for human entry.

As time passed and patience wore thin, one Gaskins employee attempted to enter the still hazardous manhole prematurely. Brandon calmly informed the distressed Gaskins co-worker that no one could enter the manhole until the air was safe.

Once the air was safe, the concerned co-worker entered the manhole and attached the rope under the victim's arms. The victim was pulled to safety by two Strack employees – who began feeding him fresh air and talking him back to semi-consciousness. Paramedics and the fire department arrived on the scene and took over the situation.

It can be noted that this emergency situation was handled properly and with extreme awareness. The concern and courage of everyone on the Strack crew exemplifies the necessity of teamwork, training and how crucial it is to work together and fully access the task at hand. Brandon Benefield's awareness and educated calculations for this recovery were critical in the successful rescue and prevention of further injuries. The efforts and awareness of Brandon Benefield and Strack Crew 24 are shining examples of how important it is to always work smart and safe while 'Building a Better Georgia.'