



# H.R. LaBounty Safety Awards Nomination Form

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## Nomination Deadlines:

**Fall Conference Awards: September 30, 2018**

**Spring Conference Awards: March 1, 2019**

**Agency:** Merced Irrigation District

**Project/Initiative Title:** Confined Space Rescue Team (In-house)

**Employee/Department/Committee Nominated:**

**Name(s):** Tom Rogers - Superintendent & Eric Couture - Risk Manager

**Job Title/Department:** Water Operations - Facilities and Maintenance

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## Nomination Summary

*Write a brief summary of your project/initiative. Clearly state the problem/hazard recognized by the nominee and the specific reasons that they initiated corrective action.*

Underground cement pipe repair is performed within the operations of the Facilities and Maintenance department. These operations involve confined spaces and entry permit procedures. As part of the Cal/OSHA and Fed OSHA regulations, rescue services must be available and able to respond. A



recommendation for response time is within four minutes to prevent the onset of potential brain damage from a lack of oxygen, or worse if an IDLH exposure exists. Since our operations take place in various remote areas throughout the district, a dependency on the local fire department to provide standby rescue services would be inadequate for immediate response times. Response times from local fire agencies could be from 10-30 minutes depending on the location of the work. Prior rescue services were provided by a vendor that at times had proven to be unsatisfactory with their limited services, equipment and experience, potentially putting the district employees at risk and a risk to themselves. Thus giving reason to train and equip our own employees and re-develop our confined space program and rescue plan. Would-be rescuers are the leading cause for deaths in confined spaces. If our own employees are doing the work and an emergency rescue is needed, typically the natural response is to help save their co-worker. But if the employees are properly trained and equipped, then we can mitigate the risk of injury or death.

*Describe the specific actions taken to resolve the problem(s) or challenge(s). Share the best practices that made this initiative successful for the agency and its impact.*

The district has hired a consultant -Dr. Michael Estep owner of RescueTech to help revise our Confined Space Program and develop our Rescue Plans. Dr. Estep is a confined space rescue trainer for the OSHA Training Institute and for the Sacramento Safety Center. We currently have (7) maintenance employees (including the district's risk manager), 40-HR Confined Space Rescue trained. The district also has purchased a confined space trailer and applicable equipment needed for effective entry and rescue. Additional equipment is continually being purchased as budgets allow. Mock rescue training has been performed with our consultant and is continuing throughout this year and on an annual basis.

*State whether the hazard was reduced with engineering controls, introduced a new administrative or work procedure, or relied on personal protective equipment to solve the problem.*

Our administrative work procedures have changed since we have moved to a trained certified in-house rescue team. We are no longer depending on a standby rescue vendor for the operations within the water maintenance department. We are identifying and assessing our confined spaces. Site/work specific entry and rescue procedures are continually being developed. Equipment and PPE have been purchased to be used during entry and rescue operations. Our employees are developing confidence in their abilities to set up the rescue equipment prior to beginning work and how to manage their roles and responsibilities in the event a rescue is needed.

*Describe any extraordinary circumstances that made this nominee's safety accomplishments significant.  
Describe whether the nominee influenced safety in the workplace, encouraged employee participation in safety efforts, obtained organizational "buy in" to implement the solution.*

The confined space rescue team is the first ever at the district. The Superintendent has supported the endeavor of developing the district's confined space rescue team, by establishing a dedicated budget and allotted time for employee training and the development of the program.

*Describe whether the project/initiative addressed a hazard or exposure included in the JPIA Commitment to Excellence Program.*



*This initiative will provide the training and equipment necessary for our team to provide adequate rescue services in a safe and best practices manner.*

- Office/Field Ergonomics
- Vehicle Operations
- Slip/trip/falls – falls from heights
- Other: Rescue Response Time

*List and attach any supporting materials that you feel are important for the reviewers to gain a complete picture of the nomination. Digital photos, supporting documentation, sample forms, etc.*

Photos; On-site Rescue Plan Template; Confined Space Program (in-revision)

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**Nominated by:** Victor Moreno

**Signature:** Victor Moreno Date:09/25/18  
(Type Name)

**General Manager:** John Sweigard Date:09/25/18  
(Type Name)

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Please email this form with supporting documents and digital photos to [tlofing@acwajpia.com](mailto:tlofing@acwajpia.com).





