Inert Entry Standard – M&CA US

1. Purpose
This Inert Entry Standard defines the minimum requirements for planning, authorizing, and executing any entry into a confined space intentionally filled with an inert atmosphere (e.g., nitrogen) within M&CA US retail assets. This standard ensures compliance with GDP 4.5-0001 and establishes practical controls appropriate for contractor work at retail locations.

2. Scope
This standard applies to all bp employees, contractors, and vendors performing work in confined spaces that have been purged with inert gas, creating an oxygen-deficient or hazardous atmosphere. Inert entry is considered high-risk and shall only be used when no safer alternative exists. Retail assets are not designed for routine inert entry activities; therefore, this document provides simplified requirements applicable to the US Convenience environment.

3. Definition of Inert Entry
Inert entry is the physical entry of a worker into a confined space that contains an intentionally inerted atmosphere (e.g., nitrogen), resulting in oxygen concentration below safe breathing limits. This environment presents immediate life-threatening hazards, including instantaneous unconsciousness and death without appropriate life-support systems.

4. When Inert Entry May Be Required
- Cleaning, inspection, or repairs inside tanks or vessels purged with nitrogen.
- Removal of residues or contaminants where oxygen must be displaced.
- Specialized entry where flammable atmospheres must be controlled through inerting.

5. Prohibited Conditions
- Inert entry shall not be conducted at US Convenience retail assets unless approved by the Entity HSSE Manager.
- No bp employee may enter an inert atmosphere.
- Only trained contractors with appropriate life-support equipment may perform inert entry.

6. Roles & Responsibilities
- Inert Entry Contractor: Provides trained entrants, topside attendants, and life-support equipment.
- bp Representative: Confirms work scope, verifies contractor competency, and ensures permitting is completed.
- Entry Supervisor: Confirms safe conditions, authorizes entry, and supervises execution.
- Attendant (Inert Entry Watch): Monitors entrant and communication systems at all times.

7. Planning Requirements
- Task Risk Assessment must be completed prior to any inert entry.
- Contractor must submit an Inert Entry Execution Plan.
- Emergency Rescue Plan must be reviewed and approved by bp HSSE.
- A pre-job meeting must be conducted with all personnel on-site.

8. Atmospheric Requirements
- Oxygen concentration shall be verified as oxygen-deficient (to confirm inerting is complete).
- Continuous gas monitoring is required at the entry point.
- Life-support equipment must be tested before entry and capable of supporting the entrant for the full duration.

9. Required Equipment
- Supplied-air respirators or full life-support systems.
- Communication systems capable of hands-free operation.
- Harness and retrieval system rated for rescue.
- Continuous atmospheric monitors at the entry point.

10. Rescue Requirements
- Rescue team must be on-site and dedicated exclusively to the entry activity.
- No entry may occur until rescue systems are in place and tested.
- Rescue entrants must never enter the space until a second rescuer is available.

11. Required Checklists & Documentation
- Inert Entry Pre-Job Checklist
- Inert Entry Execution Plan
- Emergency Rescue Plan
- Confined Space Entry Permit