

TOOL BOX TALKS

Unsafe Trenches

Trenching and excavation companies should make every effort to prevent cave-ins. Trench collapses kill construction workers on a frequent basis. All workers on the trenching / excavation jobsite should be familiar with trenching safety practices. Even though trench safety has been taught for thirty years, they still kill construction workers today. Review this Tool Box Talk with members of your organization that work “in the trenches.”

WORKSAFE TIPS

EXCAVATION TRIGGER NUMBERS

- 4 feet — need to be given adequate access or egress. (ladder or steps into the trench)
- 4 feet — atmospheric testing where there is likely to be a hazard.
- 5 feet — sloping or shoring required.
- 25 feet of lateral travel requires additional access or egress installed. (ladder every 50 feet)
- 18 inches — minimum clearance above the ground for trench box.
- 6 feet — fall protection is required. (guardrails to prevent falls into the trench)
- Less than 5 feet shoring is not required after daily inspection from competent person and no indication of potential cave-in. (rare instance)

MORE TRENCH SAFETY INFO:

- Make sure materials or equipment that may fall or roll into the trench are moved at least 2 feet back.
- Provide warning systems when trenches are near traffic areas.
- Never allow workers to stand or work beneath loads or digging equipment.
- Never lift or lower workers with digging equipment
- Provide safe access to all trenches 4 feet or deeper.
- Ladders must be within 25 feet of all workers.

TRENCH RESCUES REQUIRE:

- Extensive resources
- Multiple personnel
- Involvement by many government agencies
- Trench rescues require many hours of labor
- Survival is not likely

UNSAFE TRENCH! NO SHORING & WATER INFILTRATION



ANY TRENCH 5 FEET IN DEPTH REQUIRES PROTECTIVE SHORING, SHIELDING, BENCHING OR SLOPING.





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