

## Excavation Hazard Alert Number 2

Fiscal Year 2019 isn't nearly over yet cave-in related fatalities appear to have increased over the last several months. Nationally there appear to have been eight cave-in fatalities just in April 2019. In Houston there have been several cave-in close calls and injury related incidents that could have easily been a fatality. Typically a review is done as a look back on the previous complete fiscal year, but due to the number of recent events this flyer discusses what's been occurring this year in order to re-emphasize we need to do better and get the word out. OSHA's priority goal is reducing trench related hazards and we can only do that if everyone does their part to spread the word on safe trench practices and ensure that trenching related practices are followed.



Reviewing OSHA records and news reports, it appears that in April, 2019 there were possibly eight cave-in incidents resulting in ten deaths

April 2019

An employee stepped out of the trench box into the trench to lube a sewer pipe. A portion of the trench collapsed fatally injuring him.

April 2019

An employee entered the 9' deep trench to repair a water line that had been ruptured during the installation of a water culvert. About 30 minutes after the repair work had started the trench collapsed totally engulfing him.



Photo credit: Putnam County Rescue Squad

April 2019

Employee was working inside an excavation without cave-in protection that was about 8' deep installing 4" PVC sewer pipe when the trench wall caved-in. Employee was trapped inside and died of asphyxiation.



Dayton Daily News: Richard Wilson, Staff Writer

April 2019

Employee was fatally injured during a trench collapse while installing culvert pipe in a trench 16-18' deep.



The Columbus Dispatch: Dean Narciso

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April 2019

Two workers were installing irrigation pipes when the 6'-7' deep trench collapsed killing them.



The Argus Observer: Leslie Thompson, Larry Meyer

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April 2019

Two employees laying sewer pipe in a 15' deep trench were fatally injured when the trench caved in.



The Denver Post: Kieran Nicholson

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April 2019

A worker installing a pool died when the trench collapsed.



Photo Credit: Lone Peak Fire District

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April 2019

Employee was standing on asphalt on the edge of the trench guiding a backhoe operator when the wall of a trench collapsed. He fell into the trench and the opposite side of the excavation sloughed off on top of the worker burying him. The trench was reportedly 16' deep.



Author: LaPorsche Thomas, Lauren Padgett

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Since the start of the fiscal year in October 2018, we have not had a trench cave-in fatality in the Houston area. However, we have had a number of close calls.

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November 2018

Worker trapped in a 12' trench when it collapsed.



Credit: Houston Fire Department

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February 2019

Workers removed the upper braces from between the plywood shoring and entered the trench to remove the lower braces when a section of wall about 35' in length collapsed. The dirt pushed one side of the shoring over forming a tee pee shape and the workers were able to crawl out without serious injury.



Credit: OSHA Houston North

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April 2019

Worker suffered a head injury when the trench he was working in collapsed and life-flight was required to take him to the hospital.



KHOU 11 News Author: Brett Buffington

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March 2019

A section of trench collapsed and the workers continued working. OSHA inspectors arrived and another section of the trench collapsed. Fortunately the workers were now out of the trench.



Credit: OSHA Houston North

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May 2019

Worker entered a 12' trench which collapsed.



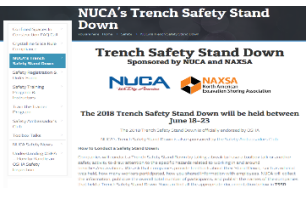

Credit: Spring Fire Department/Facebook

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**One cubic yard of soil can weigh up to 3,000 pounds which would be like having a car fall on top of you!**

**Trench Rescues put our first responders in danger too.**

August 2018, a first responder responded to, and assisted in, rescue efforts to remove a worker from the trench. This required him to descend 20 feet into the trench using a rope rescue system and once the victim was freed, he had to ascend back up 20 feet and assist with loading the subject into the EMS unit. He later found unresponsive in the restroom/shower area of the fire station after returning to the station from the trench rescue operation.

 <p><b>NUCA's Trench Safety Stand Down</b></p> <p><b>Trench Safety Stand Down</b> Sponsored by NUCA and NAXSA</p> <p>The 2018 Trench Safety Stand Down will be held between June 18-23</p>	<p><b>NUCA Trench Safety Stand Down Webpage</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.nuca.com/tssd">http://www.nuca.com/tssd</a></p> <p>Tools and resources on excavation safety that can be used to for a safety stand down. A certificate of participation can also be obtained.</p>
 <p><b>OSHA Trenching and Excavation Safety and Health Topic Page</b></p> <p>Excavation and trenching hazards and safety information</p>	<p><b>OSHA Trenching and Excavation Safety and Health Topic Page</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/trenchingexcavation/index.html">https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/trenchingexcavation/index.html</a></p> <p>Excavation and trenching hazards and safety information</p>

**Safety doesn't have shortcuts. You might be trying to save a minute but may lose your life.**

**Let's send everyone home safely at the end of the day.**



\*Disclaimer: Preliminary information - Fatalities and Catastrophes are logged or recorded in various mediums and reports generated using various criteria. Late reporting, natural causes which may have generated an initial report, fatalities transferred to other jurisdictions and other factors may affect the overall numbers over time. Data is edited and key word search to determine a count of fatalities/catastrophes under OSHA jurisdiction and may change over time as records are updated. Narratives are rewritten and edited and may not reflect the final results of an investigation. In some cases narratives may be updated using news sources regarding the incident. The numbers and information are for accident prevention purposes and trending and is not intended to be a statistical study or evaluation. For questions contact the Houston North OSHA Office, Jim Shelton, CAS, at [shelton.james@dol.gov](mailto:shelton.james@dol.gov)