

Excavation Hazard Alert #2

Yesterday, November 13, 2019 we had a trench related fatality in the Houston area. A 5-7' deep trench collapsed burying a worker. Another worker attempted to dig him out until the mini-excavator began falling into the trench.

Every trench has the potential to be deadly. Following the basics of trench safety basics will prevent further deaths and tragedy.



Talk to your workers, your supervisors, and your subcontractors. Let's not let this happen again.



When done safely, trenching operations can reduce worker exposure to cave-ins, falling loads, hazardous atmospheres, and hazards from mobile equipment.

OSHA standards require that trenches and protective systems be inspected daily and as conditions change by a competent person before work begins.

Never enter a trench unless:

- It has been properly inspected by a competent person.
- Cave-in protection measures are in place.
- There is a safe way to enter and exit.
- Equipment and materials are away from the edge.
- It is free of standing water and atmospheric hazards.

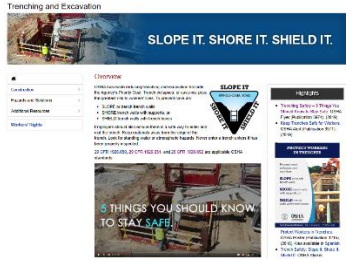


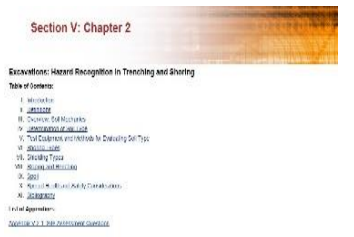
Prevent trench collapses:

- Trenches 5 feet deep or greater require a protective system.
- Trenches 20 feet deep or greater require a protective system designed by a registered professional engineer.

Protective systems for trenches:

- **SLOPE** or bench trench walls by cutting back the trench wall at an angle inclined away from the excavation.
- **SHORE** trench walls by installing aluminum hydraulic or other types of supports to prevent soil movement.
- **SHIELD** trench walls by using trench boxes or other types of supports to prevent soil cave-ins.

Additional resources:

	<p>OSHA Trenching and Excavation Safety and Health Topic Page</p> <p>https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/trenchingexcavation/index.html</p> <p>Excavation and trenching hazards and safety information</p>
	<p>NUCA Trench Safety Stand Down Webpage</p> <p>http://www.nuca.com/tssd</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>OSHA Trench and Excavation Publications</p> <p>https://www.osha.gov/pls/publications/publication.athruz?pType=Industry&pID=213 and https://www.osha.gov/video/</p>
	<p>OSHA Technical Manual Trenching and Excavations</p> <p>https://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_v/otm_v_2.html</p> <p>Information on trenching and excavation</p>

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

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

This information has been developed by an OSHA Compliance Assistance Specialist and is intended to assist employers, workers, and others as they strive to improve workplace health and safety. While we attempt to thoroughly address specific topics [or hazards], it is not possible to include discussion of everything necessary to ensure a healthy and safe working environment in a presentation of this nature. Thus, this information must be understood as a tool for addressing workplace hazards, rather than an exhaustive statement of an employer's legal obligations, which are defined by statute, regulations, and standards. Likewise, to the extent that this information references practices or procedures that may enhance health or safety, but which are not required by a statute, regulation, or standard, it cannot, and does not, create additional legal obligations. Finally, over time, OSHA may modify rules and interpretations in light of new technology, information, or circumstances; to keep apprised of such developments, or to review information on a wide range of occupational safety and health topics, you can visit OSHA's website at www.osha.gov. For questions contact Jim Shelton at the Houston North OSHA office: Shelton.james@dol.gov