

Toolbox Talk # 6.03 – Trench Safety II

Your employer has a tremendous amount of responsibility to make excavations and trenches safe for you to work in. Employees also have responsibilities, the first of which is to question any unsafe conditions at your excavation site and report them to your supervisor/competent person.

Questions to consider.

- Are all surface hazards and the spoil pile moved back the required two feet from the edge of the excavation, or are devices used to keep materials from falling or rolling into excavations?
- Are all underground utilities located and protected, supported, or removed?
- Is a safe means of entry and exit provided for excavations more than four feet deep, and is it no more than 25 feet from the employees?
- Are you required to wear warning vests or other high-visibility garments when your work exposes you to public vehicular traffic?
- Are you prohibited from standing under any loads handled by lifting or digging equipment?
- Is a warning system in place when the operator of mobile equipment does not have a clear direct view of the edge of the excavation while the equipment is being operated adjacent to or near the excavation's edge?
- When hazardous atmospheres exist or could exist, are they tested for and eliminated prior to entry?
- Is rescue equipment provided where hazardous atmospheres exist or could reasonably be expected to develop during work in the excavation?
- Is adequate protection provided before anyone works in an excavation when water accumulation is a hazard?
- Are adjacent structures shored, braced, or underpinned when their stability is endangered by the excavation operations?
- Is protection provided when loose rock or soil that could fall or roll from the excavation face poses a hazard?
- Does your company competent person: (1) inspect the excavation, adjacent area, and protective systems daily for evidence of situations that could result in possible cave-ins, indications of failure of protective systems, hazardous atmospheres, or other hazardous conditions, (2) inspect after every rainstorm or other occurrence that could increase the hazards, and (3) remove employees from the excavation or trench if any of these hazards exist?
- Are employees protected from cave-ins by adequate protective systems (including sloping and benching, support, or shield systems)?
- Do you use safe work practices and follow the above requirements (that apply) when your supervisor/competent person is not around?
- Do you properly use the equipment and protective gear that your company has provided?
- Do you immediately report unsafe situations to your supervisor/competent person?
- Do you know when to leave an excavation and how to respond to an emergency?

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Project: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Company: _____

Other safety issues covered or comments from crew members:

Attendees:

Name: (please print)	Signature:	Company:
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