

TOOLBOX TALK

JOBSITE HAZARDS



Excavation Safety

On average, 54 fatalities occur from trenching and excavation work each year. OSHA standards require, before any worker entry, that employers have a competent person inspect trenches daily and as conditions change to ensure elimination of excavation hazards. When working around excavations here are some safety measures to remember:

2 FEET - SPOIL PILES

Keep excavated soil (spoils) and other materials at least 2 feet (0.6 meters) from trench edges.

3 FEET - LADDER

When portable ladders are used for access in and out of the excavation, the ladder side rails shall extend at least 3 feet (.9 m) above the upper landing surface of the excavation.

4 FEET - ACCESS

OSHA requires employers to provide ladders, steps, ramps, or other safe means of egress for workers working in trench excavations 4 feet (1.22 meters) or deeper. The means of egress must be located so as not to require workers to travel more than 25 feet (7.62 meters) laterally within the trench.

5 FEET - PROTECTIVE SYSTEM

Trenches 5 feet (1.5 meters) deep or greater require a protective system (sloping, benching, shoring, or shielding) unless the excavation is made entirely in stable rock. If less than 5 feet deep, a competent person may determine that a protective system is not required. A protective system needs to be appropriate for the soil type (as determined by the competent person). It could be stable rock, Type A, Type B, or Type C soil.

6 FEET - FALL PROTECTION

When working, each employee who is constructing a leading edge 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above lower levels shall be protected from falling by guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest systems.

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Take Home Point:

Cave-Ins can be very dangerous and are usually fatal. Prevent these types of trenching and excavation hazards by following proper OSHA standards when working in and around an open trench.

Date: _____

Safety Leader: _____

Crew Members:

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