

Employee Safety

OSHA: Trenching and Excavation

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Hazards and Solutions

The primary hazard of trenching and excavation is employee injury from collapse. Soil analysis is important in order to determine appropriate sloping, benching, and shoring. Additional hazards include working with heavy machinery; manual handling of materials; working in proximity to traffic; electrical hazards from overhead and underground power-lines; and underground utilities, such as natural gas. The following references aid in recognizing and controlling some of the hazards associated with trenching and excavation.

- ***National Emphasis Program on Trenching and Excavation.*** OSHA Directive CPL 02-00-161, (October 1, 2018). Describes policies and procedures for continued implementation of an OSHA National Emphasis Program (NEP) to identify and to reduce hazards which are causing or likely to cause serious injuries and fatalities during trenching and excavation.
- ***Working Safely in Trenches.*** OSHA QuickCard™ (Publication 3243), (2018). Also available in *Spanish*.
- ***Protect Workers in Trenches.*** OSHA Poster (Publication 3215), (2018). Also available in *Spanish*.
- ***Trenching and Excavation Safety.*** OSHA Fact Sheet (Publication 3476), (2011).
- ***Trenching and Excavation Safety.*** OSHA Publication 2226, (2015). Highlights key elements of the standards and describes safe work practices that can protect workers from cave-ins and other hazards.
- ***Working Outdoors in Warm Climates.*** OSHA Fact Sheet, (September 2005).

Watch this brief video to learn about five things you need to know to stay safe:

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