

WEEKLY SAFETY MEETING

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Safety Meeting Outlines Box 700, Frankfort, IL 60423 815-464-0200 No. 8 Vol. 19 Week of February 24, 2025

Company Name _____ Job Name _____ Date _____

EXCAVATIONS & TRENCHING

Two employees were installing storm-drain pipes in a trench, approximately 25 feet long, 12 feet deep and 6 feet wide. The side walls consisted of unstable soil undermined by sand and water. The water in the north end of the trench was 3-5 feet deep; and 5-6 inches of water had accumulated in the south end. At the time of the accident, a backhoe was being used to clear the trench. The west wall of the trench collapsed, and one employee was crushed and killed. This was an actual trench accident investigated by OSHA. If safety regulations had been followed, this death would have been prevented.

OSHA Standard 1926.651(k)(1) requires that a competent person inspect excavations, adjacent areas and protective systems daily. This knowledgeable person must look for evidence of situations that could result in possible cave-ins, also any indication of failure of protective systems, hazardous atmospheres, or any other dangerous conditions. The inspection must be made prior to the start of each shift and as needed throughout the entire operation. An inspection is also required after every rainstorm or other occurrence that might increase hazards.

In 1926.651(c)(2) OSHA requires that a safe means of egress be provided in all trench excavations that are 4 feet or more in depth. A stairway, ladder or ramp must be located so that the employee must travel no more than 25 feet to reach the means of exit.

Had these OSHA requirements been observed, the death of the employee in the above trench accident would not have occurred. Trench and excavation safety is an absolute must! You may not be the one fined if an accident occurs, you may be the one that's dead! If you are scheduled to work in an excavation, find and read the entire Excavation Standard 1926.650-.652. Has there been sufficient preparation to prevent water accumulation and/or the formation of a hazardous atmosphere? Is the sloping or benching, or other support system adequate to protect you? Do you have the proper personal protective equipment? You need to know before you enter the excavation. Don't become another statistic -- take the time to follow the regulations. Ask your supervisor if you have any questions regarding trench or excavation work.

SAFETY REMINDERS

**Excavated material and other objects
must be kept at least two feet away from a trench opening.**

Special Topics For Your Project _____

Employee Safety Recommendations _____

Reviewed M.S.D.S. # _____ Subject: _____

Meeting Attended By

Supervisors Signature _____