



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

Safety Tip of the Week

Safety in Excavations and Trenching

Excavations pose a serious and sometimes fatal threat to the safety of our workers. An excavation accident is 15 times more likely to result in death than any other construction accident.

It is important to understand the risks associated with excavations.

- Between 100-400 people are killed per year in excavations.
- There are an estimated 10,000 entrapments each year.
- For every death in a trench, one person is crippled and can never work again and two people cannot return to the same job.



General Trenching and Excavation Rules:

- Keep heavy equipment away from trench edges.
- Identify other sources that might affect trench stability.
- Keep excavated soil (spoils) and other materials at least 2 feet (0.6 meters) from trench edges.
- Know where underground utilities are located before digging.
- Test for atmospheric hazards such as low oxygen, hazardous fumes, and toxic gases when > 4 feet deep.
- Inspect trenches at the start of each shift.
- Inspect trenches following a rainstorm or other water intrusion.
- Do not work under suspended or raised loads and materials.
- Inspect trenches after any occurrence that could have changed conditions in the trench.
- Ensure that personnel wear high visibility or other suitable clothing when exposed to vehicular traffic.

Remember you are the one going into the hole, so check the methods being used to protect the excavation. Prior to climbing down the ladder, check the spoil pile location and equipment that is near the excavation. Do you feel comfortable with the excavation, its protection, and the nearby surroundings?

ENTERING AN UNPROTECTED EXCAVATION OR TRENCH COULD BE THE LAST THING YOU EVER DO!