

## ToolBox Talks - Excavations

Most excavation accidents occur in trenches which have no support at all, because they are in so-called "safe ground", or because work has gone beyond the support provided.

### EXCAVATION ACCIDENTS

It is commonly thought that deaths associated with excavation collapses are due to the workers being suffocated because they are completely buried, but this is not entirely true. Many of the deaths and a majority of the injuries involve workers being partially buried. The injuries sustained are usually crushing injuries caused by the sheer weight of the collapsing soil.

The accidents associated with excavations happen for many reasons, some of which are: -

1. Shoring was not installed where required.
2. Employees worked beyond the shoring protection.
3. Excavation walls and shoring were not inspected frequently for signs of movement or deterioration or maintained when necessary
4. Workers re-entered excavations without inspecting the walls or shoring after rainstorms.

There are other contributory reasons for excavation accidents beside soil and shoring failures, such as: -

1. Dirt, sheet piles and construction materials being stored too close to the edge of the excavations causing uncontrolled collapse.
2. Equipment operating too close to the edge of the excavation causing uncontrolled collapse.
3. Improper access, damaged or missing ladder or no ramps causing injuries through personnel falling into excavation.
4. Workers trying to jump over excavations.

Check the following: -

1. The excavation has been assessed to see if it requires to be supported or battered back to a safe angle.
2. Always check that you have ladder access, and it is positioned in the supported area.
3. Never throw tools or materials down to someone in an excavation, use a rope to lower them down.
4. Always wear a safety helmet - even small stones falling from the top can injure you.
5. Drivers of mobile plant must take special care when operating close to the edge of excavations.
6. Excavations more than two metres deep must have edge protection.
7. Materials, equipment and spoil must not be stacked close to the edge of excavations

**REMEMBER A CUBIC METRE OF EARTH WEIGHS OVER 1.5 TONNE.  
IF YOU GET IT WRONG  
THE CONSEQUENCES COULD BE GRAVE.**

Person Leading Discussion			Date		Time
No.	Name	Signature	No.	Name	Signature
1.			6.		
2.			7.		
3.			8.		
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