



Company \_\_\_\_\_ Job Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Tool Box Talk: **Trenches and Excavations**

OSHA Standard 1926.651(k)(1) requires that every trench and/or excavation must be inspected daily by a competent person, prior to the start of work and as needed throughout the work shift.

A safe trench or excavation must adhere strictly to all plans and specifications. Soil conditions must be monitored for changes and location of all existing utilities is mandatory. A safe means of entry and exit is required if trench is deeper than 4 feet. See standard for specifics.

Any of the following could affect your safety when in a trench or excavation:

**WARNING SIGNS OF FAILURE:** Tension cracks in sidewalls, slopes and surface adjacent to excavations. Ground settlement or subsidence. Spalling or sloughing soils. Changes in wall slope or a bulge. Increase in strut loads. Excessive seepage and piping of fine soils. Softening of sidewalls or boiling of trench bottom. Creaking or popping sounds. Visual deformation of bracing system or trench.

**SLOPING/BENCHING - CHECK FOR:** Excessive vibration. Location of spoil pile and backfill. Equipment location relative to excavation. Excessive wear or damage to equipment. Signs of distress cracking, bulging, etc. Improper installation procedures or alignment of members. Incorrect installation of connections. Workers in unbraced trench or improper system being used.

**SHORING/BRACING - CHECK FOR:** Maintenance of proper slope ratio. Excessive vibrations. Location of the spoil pile, trees, boulders or structures. Equipment location relative to the excavation. Secondary soil or rock structure. Presence of water seepage and/or rainfall. Signs of distress.

**TRENCH SHIELD/BOX - CHECK FOR:** Clearance between shield and trench sidewalls. Adequate free-board at top of shield. Proper slope above shield. Current certification of shield. Excessive wear or damage or improper use of shield. Workers in an unshielded trench or improper shield being used.

**THE COMPETENT PERSON MUST BE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION.**

Safety Recommendations: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Specific Topics: \_\_\_\_\_

M.S.D.S. Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attended By: \_\_\_\_\_

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