

# ☰ Tool Box Talk | Trenching Safety

When done safely, trenching operations can reduce worker exposure to cave-ins, falling loads, hazardous atmospheres, and hazards from mobile equipment.

OSHA standards require that trenches and protective systems be inspected daily and as conditions change by a competent person before work begins.

## Competent Person

Certain activities or safety procedures at a construction site require design, inspection or supervision by a competent person. The OSHA Construction Standard defines a competent person as someone who is:

- capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings, or
- working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and
- who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them.

### Never enter a trench unless:

- It has been properly inspected by a competent person.
- Cave-in protection measures are in place.
- There is a safe way to enter and exit.
- Equipment and materials are away from the edge.
- It is free of standing water and atmospheric hazards.

### Prevent trench collapses:

- Trenches 5 feet deep or greater require a protective system.
- Trenches 20 feet deep or greater require a protective system designed by a registered professional engineer.

### Protective systems for trenches:

- **SLOPE** or bench trench walls by cutting back the trench wall at an angle inclined away from the excavation.
- **SHORE** trench walls by installing aluminum hydraulic or other types of supports to prevent soil movement.
- **SHIELD** trench walls by using trench boxes or other types of supports to prevent soil cave-ins.





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This form documents that the training specified above was presented to the listed participants. By signing below, each participant acknowledges receiving this training.

**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Trainer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Trainer's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Participants:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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