



Trench Safety

When a trench caves in, the weight of the dirt can trap and kill workers. One cubic yard of dirt can weigh 3,000 pounds or more. Each year, trench collapses seriously injure or kill construction workers. In 2016, for example, 23 workers were killed in trench collapses.

Jim, Nico, and Jose's Story

Three laborers were working in an 8-foot-high wall trench. The walls were not shored-up. One side caved in, burying Nico and partially burying Jim. Jose managed to escape unharmed. Jim was pulled out. Nico suffocated and died.

- ✘ **How could this incident have been prevented?**
- ✘ **Have you ever been in a trench cave-in? If so, what happened?**

Remember This

- **Never** enter an unprotected or uninspected trench, even for a short task. A trained, competent person must inspect the trench and surroundings first.
- Make sure you understand your employer's trench emergency program.
- Make sure rocks and dirt are kept at least 2 feet away from the top of the trench.
- **Never** work alone in a trench **and** never without a lookout standing by.
- Make sure trench protection is provided by your employer. OSHA allows benching or sloping ground, shoring, or shielding with supports or trench boxes.

How can we stay safe today?

What will we do at the worksite to promote trench safety?

1. _____

2. _____

OSHA Regulation: 1926.651(k)(1)

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