

SAFETY TOPICS

Excavation & Trenching



Before You Dig

Before digging, you must have all the underground utilities located. Call 811 at least two working days in advance. At no cost to you, the owners of any underground utilities in the area will send a professional locator to mark all buried utilities, using flags and spray paint.

Color-Coding: An Easy Guide

Color	What it means
Purple	Reclaimed water
Blue	Potable (drinkable) water
Red	Electric
Green	Sewer/drainage
Yellow	Gas/petroleum pipeline
Orange	Communications (telephone, cable)
White	BEFORE YOU CALL, use this to pre-mark your intended excavation site

Trenching and Excavating

If a trench is to be five feet deep or more--unless it's dug into stable rock (classified as Class A Soil by a competent person) --a protective system is required. Protective systems come in many forms and can be designed using the data tables included in the regulations such as in CalOSHA's 1541.1.



Excavations less than five feet deep may not require a protective system, but whenever a person is to enter an excavation, regardless of depth, a trained trench competent person is required to inspect it for safety. Any trench that is greater than twenty feet deep requires a protective system approved by a certified professional engineer, at the bare minimum.

Important Reminders

- Do not work under raised or suspended loads.
- Test for atmospheric hazards such as low oxygen, hazardous fumes, or toxic gases when > four feet deep.
- Keep heavy equipment away from trench edges.
- The competent person must always inspect trenches following storms or any water intrusion, or following any event that could have changed trench conditions.
- Keep excavated soil and other materials at least two feet from trench edges.

SAFETY STATISTICS

- There are nearly 50 trenching deaths each year.
- This number has gone down by 12% since the 1990s, when fatalities averaged of 58 per year.
- The great majority of fatalities occurred in small companies with fewer than 50 employees.
- 46% of that number happened in companies with fewer than 10 workers.

SAFETY MEETING ATTENDANCE

Excavation & Trenching

Company: _____ Date: _____

Trainer: _____ Location: _____

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION TOPICS:

ATTENDEES:

_____	_____
_____	_____
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