

TalkingPoints

Trenching

- OSHA is focusing on reducing trenching and excavation hazards. Trench collapses, or cave-ins, pose a significant risk to workers' lives. To prevent cave-ins:
 - SLOPE or bench trench walls 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 with trench boxes or other types of supports to prevent soil cave-ins.
- OSHA Cave-in Prevention Requirements:
 - Trenches under 5 feet deep must be examined by a competent person to determine if a protective system is required.
 - 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.
- Address all trenching and excavation hazards by:
 - Ensuring there is a safe way to enter and exit the trench.
 - Keeping materials away from the edge of the trench.
 - Looking for water accumulation and/or atmospheric hazards.
 - Training workers to recognize trenching and stop work when conditions become unsafe
 - Competent person inspections to identify and abate all hazards
- OSHA's [Compliance Directive for the Excavation Standard](#) describes procedures for identifying hazards that cause or are likely to cause injuries and fatalities during trenching and excavation.
- Participate in the annual [Trench Safety Stand Down – NUCA](#). It presents an opportunity for employers to talk directly to employees and others about safety. These Stand Downs focus on trench and excavation hazards and reinforce the importance of using trench protective systems and protecting workers from trenching hazards.
- Find trench safety resources at [osha.gov/trenching](https://www.osha.gov/trenching).

