Trench collapses can be deadly

Trench hazards are well-known, yet far too many workers continue to be injured or killed during excavation work. Trench collapses, or cave-ins, are more likely than other excavation-related incidents to result in worker fatalities. It only takes seconds to become buried in thousands of pounds of soil.

Trench hazards can be controlled when employers act responsibly, train employees, and follow federal standards. These important steps can keep excavation work safe:

- Ensure there is a safe way to enter and exit the trench
- Trenches must have cave-in protection – remember to **Slope, Shore, Shield**
- Keep materials away from the edge of the trench
- Look for standing water or other environmental hazards, and
- Never enter a trench unless it is properly inspected

**OSHA Wants to Help**

For assistance, employers can contact their local OSHA office or the On-Site Consultation Program.

OSHA news alerts are issued on occasion to draw attention to worker safety and health issues and solutions.