

OSHA's Trenching and Excavation Safety Fact Sheet Provides Overview of OSHA Requirements

Trenching and excavation operations can pose a high risk to workers; however, when done safely, worker exposure to potential hazards during trenching and excavation can be greatly reduced. Employers must be diligent to guard against common trenching hazards, including collapses (cave-ins), falls, falling loads, hazardous atmospheres and incidents involving mobile equipment.

OSHA has published a handy fact sheet, [Trenching and Excavation Safety](#), which succinctly summarizes the key elements of trenching and excavation operations that employers are required by OSHA standards to address, including:

Trench Safety Measures: Trenches 5 feet (1.5 meters) deep or greater require a protective system unless the excavation is made entirely in stable rock.

Competent Person: OSHA standards require, before any worker entry, that employers have a competent person inspect trenches daily and as conditions change to ensure elimination of excavation hazards.

Access and Egress: Key requirements include keeping heavy equipment away from trench edges and inspecting trenches at the start of each shift and following a rainstorm or other water intrusion.

Protective Systems: Important types of trench protective systems include benching, sloping, shoring and shielding.

Download OSHA's [Trenching and Excavation Safety](#) Fact Sheet, or visit OSHA's [Trenching and Excavation webpage](#) for more extensive information on trenching and excavation safety.

