



# HESQ BULLETIN EXCAVATIONS

January 21, 2014



Excavation and trenching cave-ins result in numerous injuries. In the US for example, there are more than **5,000 serious injuries and 100 deaths each year!** The key to prevention of this type of loss is good planning. When the side of a trench decides to move it is too late to be thinking about your safety or the safety of others. Here are some good safety rules and practices to follow when working in or around excavations.

- Plan your work and work your plan! Know the site conditions. Think about traffic, proximity and physical conditions of nearby structures, soil, surface and ground water, location of the water table, overhead and underground utilities, nearby process equipment and even weather. This is why the excavation certificate and the job hazard assessment are so important.
- Protection from cave-ins. Based on the soil condition and the type of excavation, appropriate protection should be used, such as sloping, benching, shoring, or placing a shield between the side of the excavation and the work area. Adequate precautions must be taken to ensure that vibrating equipment and vehicular traffic do not cause a cave-in.
- Work in an excavation or trench must at all times be under the immediate supervision of a qualified person.
- Keep areas around excavations clear of debris and equipment; keep materials, spoils or equipment that might fall or roll into an excavation at least 2 feet from the edge. Excavated material must be placed at least 2 feet from the edge of any trench or excavation, which is 4 or more feet in depth.
- Always consider ground water seepage as a potential cause of collapse of any trench or excavation.
- Safe access/egress must be provided (stairway, ladder, ramp, etc.). The equipment must be securely fastened in place. Access must be provided and located so no worker must laterally travel more than 25 feet to access the egress point in any trench or excavation deeper than four feet.
- Use hand or mechanical signals, or stop logs to alert operators to the edge of an excavation. If possible, keep the grade away from the excavation. Use hard barricades around the edges, with appropriate signage and lighting (if required) to alert persons of the hazard; Note proximity to live equipment and maintain clearances required.
- Don't walk close to working faces of sloped or benched excavations; or at levels above other employees unless you provide the employees at the lower levels adequate protection from the hazard of falling, rolling, or sliding material or equipment. Don't stand or work under loads being handled by lifting or digging equipment. Keep distance from working equipment at all times.

A competent person must inspect the excavation and the areas around it for possible cave-ins, failures of protective systems and equipment, hazardous atmospheres, or other hazardous conditions - **daily and after heavy rainfall.**

No job is so important or so urgent that we cannot take time to perform it safely.

TEAM DISCUSSION: Company name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (DD/MM/YY)

Name and Signature of Team leader having discussion: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name in Block Signature

Names and signatures of other persons in discussion (continue overleaf if necessary)

Name	Initial	Name	Initial	Name	Initial