Trenching Safety Topic



A safety overview on excavation and trenching at the worksite.

Excavation Safeguarding Procedures

The first step in protecting employees is removing/supporting any encumbrances that may be a hazard to the employee. Encumbrances can be anything that creates a hazardous surcharge load on the walls of the trench (equipment, vehicles, soil, any source of vibration, building materials, streams or water tables, etc.) Next, the employer must locate any underground utility installations. The employer should call the utility owner and ask for a representative to mark all areas where power lines or pipes maybe, if the owner does not respond within 24 hours you may proceed to dig with caution as long as detection equipment is used.

Each trench or excavation that is 4 feet or deeper needs established evacuation routes at 25 ft intervals, no employee would be required to travel more than 25 lateral feet to evacuate an excavation. Each exit or entrance should be equipped with a ramp, stairway, or ladder. Employees on the site who will be exposed to public traffic need to wear warning vests with reflective and/or highly visible material. Employers are also required to provide a mobile equipment warning system. If mobile equipment is in operation near the excavation barricades, stop logs, or…