



PLUMBER DIES IN TRENCH CAVE-IN!

In a recent incident, a 35-year-old plumber, John H.*, died when the trench that he was working in collapsed. He entered the trench to connect a sewer line. The trench was more than five feet deep, had no shoring or shields, and had not been benched or sloped. The dirt from the trench was piled on the ground next to the trench. John had started work for his employer the day before the incident. He did not have safety training, and he was not questioned about his safety knowledge before he started work.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

The trench was more than five feet deep. There was an increased risk of collapse that could trap a worker.

The extra weight of the dirt piled on the edge of the trench helped make the trench unstable.

John was not given safety training before he began work. He may not have understood the risks involved with trench work.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Make sure that trenches deeper than five feet are shored, shielded, sloped, or benched before any workers enter.

Make sure dirt is placed at least two feet away from trench edges.

Make sure workers receive safety training and that their safety knowledge is evaluated before starting hazardous work.

The California Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program has been investigating work-related deaths since 1992. The goal of the FACE program is to prevent these deaths by informing workers and managers of worksite hazards and how to avoid them.

For complete fatality reports of this case (05CA002), or other cases, and additional information on the California FACE program, contact:

California Department of Public Health
Occupational Health Branch (OHB), FACE Program
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, 3rd Floor, Richmond, CA 94804
(510) 620-5757

www.cdph.ca.gov/face

CA Relay Service: 711 or (800) 735-2929 (hearing/speech impaired)

To obtain a copy of this document in an alternate format, please contact OHB at (510) 620-5757. Please allow at least 10 working days to coordinate alternate format services.

* Not the victim's real name

PLEASE POST

California Department of Public Health
Occupational Health Branch, FACE Program
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, 3rd Floor
Richmond, CA 94804

FACE stands for "Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation." The purpose of the FACE program is to identify hazards that may cause work-related deaths so that employers and employees can help prevent them.

FACE is a program run by the Occupational Health Branch within the California Department of Public Health, and funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
State of California
Kimberly Belshe, Secretary
Health and Human Services Agency
Mark B. Horton, Director
Department of Public Health
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