Things to Do Before Training

➢ In the index of the Cal/OSHA Pocket Guide for the Construction Industry, look up Excavation, Trenches, and Earthwork and read the pages listed.

Introduction

Almost all construction work requires digging or excavating at some point.

The hazards associated with excavation are cave-ins, the striking of underground utilities, and falling tools, materials, and equipment.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

➢ Have you or someone you know been injured while working in trenches? What could have been done to prevent the injury?
➢ What are the trenching hazards on this site?
➢ What can we do to reduce these hazards?
**ACTIONS TO TAKE**

- Go inspect all excavations onsite and determine that all utilities are protected or removed, that all materials are at least 2 ft from the trench’s edge, and that ladders are within 25 ft of work areas.
- If a trench is over 5 ft deep, make sure the sides are sloped, benched, shored, or boxed.

**Key Points to Keep in Mind**

- The type of trench protection depends on the type of soil, and only a competent person can classify soil.
- Before doing any trenching, all underground utilities must be found and marked.
- **All utilities must be protected, supported, or removed** as necessary while a trench is open.
- Excavations **5 feet or deeper require a permit** from Cal/OSHA if workers will be entering them.
- **All soil taken from the trench must be placed at least 2 ft from edge of trench.**
- Excavations must be inspected prior to returning to work after a rainstorm, an earthquake, or whenever something has disturbed the trench.
- **Do not enter a trench 5 or more ft deep unless its sides have been sloped, benched, shored, or boxed.**
- **Ladders or safe access must be provided within 25 ft of work area** in all trenches 4 ft or deeper.
- **Trenches and supporting structures should be checked at least daily** for problems before anyone enters.