



Trench/Excavation Safety

1. Notify the Department of Safety & Environmental Affairs (S&EA) at 818-954-2890, 24 hours prior to any digging activities if the depth is five (5) feet or greater.
2. Keep a copy of the permit/notification on the job site.
3. A competent person must supervise the trench/excavation at all times.
4. Determine and locate any underground utilities before digging (e.g. telecom, plumbing lines, electrical conduits and vaults) by calling Underground ServicesAlert: (800) 422-4133. 48-hour notice required.
5. If applicable, remove trees, poles, boulders and/or objects that may contribute to hazardous site conditions.
6. The competent person shall assess the job site for existing and anticipated hazards (e.g. water, rainstorm, and/or earthquake) that might affect the trench/excavation stability before any worker entry.
7. Workers shall be protected by shoring, sloping, benching, shielding, casing or other equivalent alternate methods. Protective devices or materials which are utilized shall conform to the type of soil present at the job site.
8. All workers shall be trained and qualified to enter the trench/excavation.
9. Excavated soil/dirt (spoils) shall be kept at least two (2) feet from the edge of the trench/excavation. Check for cracks and sloughing around and above the excavation area.
10. Provide a convenient way for the workers to enter and leave the trench/excavation. A ladder, ramp or other safe means of egress shall be in a trench/excavation that are at four (4) feet or deeper and shall require no more than 25 feet of lateral travel for employees.
11. Ladders/ramps used as an access to the trench/excavation shall be free of any defects.
12. Where employees or equipment required or permitted to cross over excavations deeper than six (6) feet and wider than 30 inches, walkways or bridges with standard guardrails must be provided.
13. Maintain a safe distance when parking heavy equipment/machinery next to a trench/excavation.
14. Do not excavate beneath the surface of an adjacent foundation and/or retaining wall. Support undermined sidewalks and adjoining structures if these conditions exist.
15. Do not use an existing wall or structure as a retaining wall unless it will safely support the expected load. This must be determined by a competent person.
16. Protective barriers, barricades and/or caution signs shall be provided at the trench/excavation in remote areas, or areas where the employees/general public could fall into the trench/excavation. If applicable, adequate lighting must be on the job site during night work.
17. Back fill temporary pits, holes, and trenches/excavation immediately upon completion of operation.
18. If the trench/excavation is 20 feet deep or greater, shoring, sloping, benching, shielding or any other equivalent protective method shall be designed by a registered professional engineer.
19. Workers shall wear the appropriate type of safety shoes/work boots at the job site.
20. The use of head protection shall be determined by the competent person and provided at the job site when there is an overhead hazard.
21. If the trench/excavation may present a hazardous atmosphere (e.g. it has too much or too little oxygen; or, it contains flammable and combustible agents) call S&EA to conduct air monitoring.
22. A competent person must document and perform daily inspections of the trench/excavation.
23. If you have any safety concerns or want to report unsafe work conditions anonymously, please call the safety hotline number 818-954-2800.



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