

# TRENCHING & SHORING

## Toolbox Talk



### WHY IT MATTERS

- A trench wall can collapse without warning, leaving little time to escape.
- Cave-ins are the leading cause of fatalities in trenching work.
- Soil is extremely heavy — just one cubic yard can weigh over 3,000 lbs.

### COMMON REASONS FOR TRENCH COLLAPSES

- Cave-ins
- Unstable soil
- Nearby disturbances and vibrations
- Environmental conditions (rain, water accumulation)
- Lack of protective systems
- Incorrect sloping, shoring, or benching

#### PROTECTIVE SYSTEMS

- **Benching:** Cutting trench walls into horizontal steps to prevent collapse.
- **Sloping:** Excavating trench walls at an angle away from the excavation.
- **Shoring:** Using hydraulic or mechanical supports to hold trench walls in place.
- **Shielding:** Using trench boxes designed to withstand cave-in forces and protect workers inside.

#### THE COMPETENT PERSON

- Must have training, experience, and knowledge of trenching and excavation.
- Authorized to take prompt corrective measures.
- Responsible for daily inspections and hazard identification (soil conditions, protective systems, hazardous atmospheres).

#### BEFORE EXCAVATION

- Conduct a pre-job hazard assessment.
- Identify underground utilities (gas, electrical, water).
- Test soil stability and plan protective systems.
- Ensure safe access/egress (ladders every 25 feet).

**NEVER ENTER AN UNPROTECTED TRENCH — USE BENCHING, SLOPING, SHORING, OR SHIELDING, AND INSPECT DAILY**