

Trenching and Shoring

A SAFETY TALK FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

This safety talk is designed for discussion leaders to use in preparing safety meetings.

Set a specific time and date for your safety meeting. Publicize your meeting so everyone involved will be sure to attend.

Review this safety talk before the meeting and become familiar with its content. Make notes about the points made in this talk that pertain to your workplace. You should be able to present the material in your own words and lead the discussion without reading it.

Seating space is not absolutely necessary, but arrangements should be made so that those attending can easily see and hear the presentation.

Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time. Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

DURING THE MEETING

Give the safety talk in your own words. Use the printed talk merely as a guide.

The purpose of a safety meeting is to initiate discussion of safety problems and provide solutions to those problems. Encourage employees to discuss hazards or potential hazards they encounter on the job. Ask them to suggest ways to improve safety in their area.

Don't let the meeting turn into a gripe session about unrelated topics. As discussion leader, it's your job to make sure the topic is safety. Discussing other topics wastes time and can ruin the effectiveness of your safety meeting.

At the end of the meeting, ask employees to sign a sheet on the back of this talk as a record that they attended the safety meeting. Keep this talk on file for your records.

Trenching and Shoring

Because of the various types of soil and their angle of repose, trenching without bracing or shoring is hazardous. Even in hard soil a cave-in can occur at 5 feet. If such a failure does occur, persons in the trench can be buried, usually resulting in serious injury or even death. Improper or careless installation of bracing and shoring can cause similar tragedies. Let's review the hazards of trenching and the safety requirements for shoring and bracing.

It's essential in the excavation of trenches 5 feet or more in depth that the exposed faces of these trenches be supported and held firmly in place by adequate bracing. This requirement must be complied with for all trenching, except:

- Trenches that are in rock or hard shale.
- Trenches with exposed faces sloped to the angle of repose for the type of soil in which the excavation is being made. In no case can this angle be less than 1 foot horizontally to 3 feet vertically.
- Trenches in which substantially fabricated safety cages are used.

Under no conditions should bracing or shoring be omitted, regardless of the length of time that the trench will be open. To prevent placing an additional load on the trench face wall, excavated material must be placed no less than 3 feet from the edge of the trench. At no time should an individual be permitted to work within the area of operation of any piece of equipment that is excavating the trench.

Employees should never ride the bucket or wheel of the trencher to the bottom of the excavation. Ladders should be used at all times.

Whenever working in the area of trenching operations, don't forget--wear your hard hat.

In all bracing and shoring operations, management is responsible for the type of bracing, the material size and proper installation. You are responsible for the safe handling of the material and safe installation. By being proficient in the installation of proper bracing, the application of safety precautions and the knowledge of soil conditions, you can eliminate the hazards involved in trenching operations.

NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:

If there have been any accidents in your area, be prepared to discuss them with your employees. Listen to their ideas; they may have the answer you have been looking for. Also, mention any hazards that are unique to your operation.