



Worksite: _____ Instructor: _____ Date/Time: _____

Topic C057: Open Trenches

Introduction: Your job-site can change on a daily basis. Excavations can be made quickly with the use of modern machinery. A route that you were able to travel one day may be cut off by an open trench the next. Every new job on an unfamiliar job-site will hold its own hazards, and you need to become familiar with them in order to work safely.

Open trenches and excavations are especially hazardous on job sites if they are not properly marked or barricaded. They may not even be readily visible if the excavated material has been removed. If you're not alert to your worksite changes you can end up in an excavation with cuts, bruises, broken bones or worse. The following are guidelines for working around open trenches and excavations on the job:

Requirements for excavating operations:

- Any excavation or trench at your jobsite must be properly barricaded or flagged. This needs to be done as the work progresses to alert all workers and vehicle traffic to the hazard.
- A competent person needs to inspect all excavations, surrounding areas, and their protective systems daily to look for evidence of any hazardous situations.
- These inspections must be made before work starts, and as needed throughout the shift. Where hazards are found, such as excavations that are improperly barricaded or flagged, any employees who are exposed to those hazards must be removed from the area until necessary safeguards are provided or restored.

Open trenches and excavations are especially hazardous on job sites if they are not properly marked or barricaded.

Guidelines for working around excavations:

- If you notice that a trench or excavation is not properly barricaded or flagged notify your supervisor and co-workers immediately.
- If there's equipment or vehicles working near to, or approaching an excavation, and the edge of the excavation is not clearly visible to the operator, a warning system such as barricades, hand or mechanical signals, or stop logs must be used to prevent accidents.
- Workers should not operate vehicles or equipment around excavations unless required to do so, and the operations have been coordinated with the supervisor of trenching operations.
- Workers must never attempt to jump across an open trench or excavation. You should always go around the excavation, or use walkways if they are provided.
- Never enter a deep trench or excavation unless you are sure that it is properly shored, sloped, or benched.
- Be aware that trench and excavation banks can fall or cave in with little or no warning. This is especially true during and after wet weather. Stay well back from excavation edges whenever possible..
- You should not hand-carry loads around jobsites, especially those with excavations, unless it is necessary. If you do have to carry material, make sure that you have a clear view of your walking path.

Conclusion: Every year there are hundreds of injuries and fatalities caused by falls on the job. Be aware of the hazards when you're working in areas where excavations are being done. Be alert for changing situations as the job progresses, and make sure your co-workers also stay advised of changes.

Utilize these guidelines to stay safe while at work. Avoid having you, or a company vehicle, end up in a big hole in the ground!

Employee Attendance: (Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

These guidelines do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.