

## June is Trench Safety Month



June 2023 has been declared “**Trench Safety Month**” by the National Utility Contractors Association. This declaration of safety further highlights the association's innovative educational and safety program. The “Trench Safety Stand Down” week will be held on June 19 - 23, 2023.

A Safety Stand Down presents the opportunity for employers to talk directly to employees and others about safety. These Stand Downs will focus on trench & excavation hazards and reinforce the importance of using trench protective systems and protecting workers from trenching hazards.

Companies will conduct a Trench Safety Stand Down by taking a break to have a toolbox talk or another safety activity to draw attention to the specific hazards related to working in and around trenches/excavations.

Working in a trench is one of **(continued on page 2)**

## June is also National Safety Month!







Choose a day or week to showcase your safety pride with our Go Green for Safety campaign. Encourage your employees to dress up in green – the universal color of safety.

Workplace fatalities are unacceptable and safety is everyone’s responsibility. Doing your part today can help save a life tomorrow – maybe even your own. Take the NSC [SafeAtWork Pledge](#), and commit to:

- Actively help my employer improve our safety programs
- Report hazards promptly and suggest solutions
- Be a good safety role model for my friends and family, even off the job.

Share the pledge with your co-workers, family and friends, place it on your company’s intranet site or in a company newsletter, and post about it on your social media channels and challenge your peers to follow your lead.

The weekly topics for National Safety Month are:

- Week 1 –  Emergency Preparedness
- Week 2 –  Slips, Trips and Falls
- Week 3 –  Heat Related Illness
- Week 4 –  Hazard Recognition

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(continued from page 1) the most hazardous jobs in construction.

## Trench Safety



Soil weighs between 90 and 140 pounds per cubic foot. Therefore, one cubic yard (3 ft. by 3 ft. by 3 ft.) can weigh as much as a small pickup truck. If a person is buried, there is little chance of survival.

There are many things that can affect soil stability, such as the type of soil, water, and vibration. Soils saturated with water and previously disturbed soils are very dangerous to work in or around. But, don't be fooled, even hard soil and rock that appears stable can cave in.

Before entering a trench, the competent person at the jobsite must inspect the trench and the protection system to ensure that the trench is safe to enter. There are recorded incidents of people buried and killed in trenches 3-ft. to 4-ft. deep, so even shallow trenches must be inspected by a competent person before entering.

### Trench Safety Tips

- ▲ Locate all underground utilities before digging.
- ▲ Enter only trenches that have been sloped at the proper angle, shored, or shielded.
- ▲ Never go outside the area that has been sloped, shored, or shielded, not even for a moment.
- ▲ Eliminate or control water accumulation before entering the trench.
- ▲ Stay alert when working in or near previously disturbed soil conditions.
- ▲ Do not permit vehicles near the edge of the trench.
- ▲ Check regularly for hazardous materials and oxygen levels in the trench.
- ▲ Never allow machines to run unattended.
- ▲ Use a ladder or ramp to get in and out of the trench. Place the ladder inside the protective system. Make sure the ladder extends 3 feet beyond

the trench and is secured.

▲ Never climb on shoring or shields. Never ride in equipment buckets or on crane hooks.

▲ Wear hard hats when working in or around trenches.

▲ Stay out from under raised loads.

About half of the people killed each year in trenches die trying to rescue someone else who has been buried by a cave-in. Call 911 for help. Do not attempt a rescue unless you have been properly trained in trench-rescue techniques.

## Reminder!!!!

Remember, if you are buried by a cave-in, your chance of survival is very low. Therefore, always be sure that the trench walls are sloped, shored, or shielded with a trench box and that the trench is safe before you enter. Most trench cave-ins occur in trenches 5 to 15 feet deep. Never enter an unprotected trench. Keep safety first!

## Did You Know?

The National Safety Council's *Work to Zero* initiative, seeks to eliminate workplace fatality risk through emerging technologies, and our Muscular Skeletal Disorder Solutions Lab, works to prevent pervasive and complex musculoskeletal disorders,

## Safety Tip of the Month

Vacation time is here, don't let a tragedy ruin it. Take safety along. Remember traffic safety, pre-trip planning will help. Water and boating safety, know the rules. Avoid overexposure to the sun, wear plenty of sun block. Avoid overexertion, warm up and cool down when exercising and most of all relax - That's what vacations are all about.

## Notes From the Editor

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