



# BIE SAFETY ADVISOR

## 2019 Trench Safety Stand Down June 17-21, 2019



The National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) is once again sponsoring the 2019 Trench Safety Stand Down, June 17-21, 2019.

**What is a Safety Stand-Down?** 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.

### How to Conduct a Trench Safety Stand-Down

Companies will conduct a Trench Safety Stand Down (TSSD) 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. We ask that companies provide feedback about their Stand Down, such as when it was held, how many workers participated, how you shared information with employees. NUCA will collect the information, publicize the overall total number of participants, and publish the names of the companies that held a TSSD. You can find all the appropriate documentation in the **TSSD Forms** section, [www.nuca.com/tssd](http://www.nuca.com/tssd)

### Recognition of Participation

NUCA will provide a *Certificate of*

*Participation*, which will be mailed to all participating companies by the end of July 2019. NUCA will publish the list of names of participating organizations on the NUCA website and in our printed publications. **Submit TSSD Completion Forms** (which can be filled out electronically) and any questions you may have to [safety@nuca.com](mailto:safety@nuca.com)

### Stand Down Goals

The goal is to reach out to the many workers who work in and around trenches and excavations to provide them with information about current excavation requirements and safety procedures for working in trenches. By reaching as many workers as possible we can reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries that occur each year in our industry, and make others, such as municipal and industry workers who are also exposed, aware of these serious hazards.

### Who Can Participate?

Anyone who wants to prevent trenching and excavation hazards in the workplace can participate in the Stand Down. NUCA encourages utility construction, residential, highway construction, plumbers, military, unions, associations, educational institutes, and safety equipment manufacturers to participate. Please see the links to the materials to use during your Stand Down week. All the information for your TSSD can be found at [www.nuca.com/tssd](http://www.nuca.com/tssd)

**PROTECT WORKERS  
IN TRENCHES**

Prevent trench collapses and save lives:

**SLOPE** or bench trench walls,

**SHORE** trench walls with supports, or

**SHIELD** trench walls with trench boxes

[WWW.OSHA.GOV/TRENCHING](http://www.osha.gov/trenching) • 800-321-OSHA (6742) • TTY 877-889-5627



# Monthly Toolbox Talk

## Trench Safety

**Working in a trench is one of the most hazardous jobs in construction. Hundreds of people die and thousands are seriously injured each year due to cave-ins.**

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- to 4-ft. deep, so even shallow trenches must be inspected by a competent person before entering.

### Trench Safety Tips

- ✓ Locate 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.
- ✓ 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. Remember, if you are buried in a cave-in, your chance of survival is very low.

**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.**

