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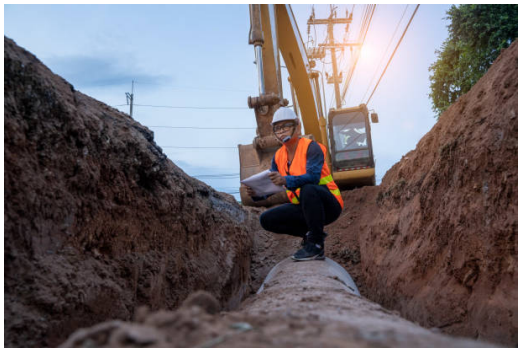
Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Trenching & Excavating Safety Message

Alarming rise in trench-related fatalities spurs US Department of Labor to announce enhanced nationwide enforcement, additional oversight

22 workers have perished in first half of 2022

To stress the dangers of disregarding federal workplace safety requirements for trenching and excavation work, OSHA enforcement staff will consider every available tool at the agency's disposal. These actions will place additional emphasis on how agency officials evaluate penalties for trenching and excavation related incidents, including criminal referrals for federal or state prosecution to hold employers and others accountable when their actions or inactions kill workers or put their lives at risk.

In keeping with its National Emphasis Program for excavations, OSHA compliance officers will perform more than 1,000 trench inspections nationwide where they may stop by, and inspect, any excavation site during their daily duties.

General Ways to Mitigate Excavation Hazards:

1. Follow OSHA's guidelines for protective systems to protect employees entering the excavation. Often times the soil being excavated is referred to as "Type C" which is the most hazardous for employees to enter.
2. Prohibit equipment and other employees from working above anyone working in the trench or excavation.
3. Keep water out of the excavation. Use pumps to remove water from the excavation and do not allow employees to be in any excavation or trench that has water accumulating in it. Water affects the integrity of the excavation.
4. Never leave the excavation open when work is not being performed in the area. Use barricades, fencing, and signage to protect both employees and anyone passing by from falling into the excavation or driving into it.
5. When there is a chance for a hazardous atmosphere in an excavation and individuals have to enter it ensure gas testing is done including any low points where gases can collect.

Discussion points:
Has anyone experienced a trench collapse or cave-in at another job?
What are some other hazards excavation operations create onsite?
How can we further protect ourselves from the hazards that excavation operations create?