

Trenching-Competent Person

INFORMATION ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COMPETENT PERSON IN TRENCHING & EXCAVATION

According to OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.650-652, the Competent Person must be able to identify:

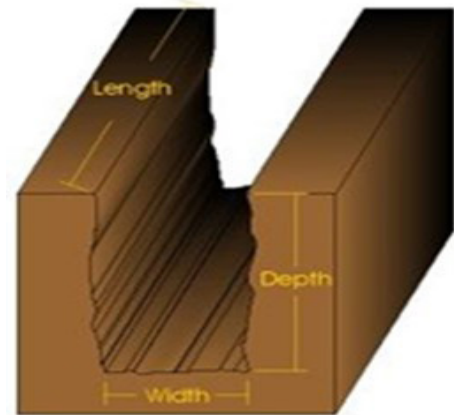
- existing and predictable hazards of the surroundings,
- unsanitary working conditions,
- hazardous working conditions,
- working conditions dangerous to employees.

The Competent Person must have the authorization to take prompt, corrective measures. If they do not, then they are not qualified to be the competent person.

It is subject to the conditions present at each individual worksite whether or not a competent person is required to be present at the jobsite at all times.

EXCAVATION

An Excavation is any man-made cut, cavity, trench, or depression in an earth surface formed by earth removal.



TRENCH

A TRENCH refers to a narrow excavation made below the surface of the ground which is deeper than it is wide, and the width does not exceed 15 feet. Trenching is common in utility work, where underground piping or cables are being installed or repaired.

INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

Daily inspections of excavations, the adjacent areas, and protective systems shall be made by a competent person for evidence of a situation that could result in:

- possible cave-ins,
- indications of failure of protective systems,
- hazardous atmospheres,
- hazardous conditions.
- a change in conditions.

An inspection shall be conducted by the competent person prior to the start of work and as needed throughout the shift.

Inspections shall also be made after every rainstorm or other hazard increasing occurrence. These inspections are only required when employee exposure can be reasonably anticipated.

Where the competent person finds evidence of a situation that could result in a possible cave-in, indications of failure of protective systems, hazardous atmospheres, or other hazardous conditions, exposed employees shall be removed from the hazardous area until the necessary precautions have been taken to ensure their safety.

If water is controlled or prevented from accumulating by the use of water removal equipment, the water removal equipment and operations shall be monitored by a competent person to ensure proper operation.

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