

Excavation Safety Requirements for Public Cemeteries in Massachusetts



Cemetery employees must be protected from cave-in:

- Provide cave-in protection when workers enter an excavated grave when:
 - Depth is greater than 5 feet; ^{1926.652(a)(1)}
 - Depth is less than 5 feet, but a cave-in hazard exists, ^{1926.652(a)(1)(ii)}
 - Regardless of how long or short a time period the employee is in the excavation. ^{1926.650(a)}
- Cave-in protection can be: trench box, shoring, or sloping. ^{1926.652(c), 1926.652(b)}
- Keep soil piles at least two feet away from the excavation edge. ^{1926.651(j)(2)}
- A Competent Person must inspect the excavation for all potential hazards, including the effectiveness of cave-in protection before allowing an employee to enter. ^{1926.651(k)(1)}
- Provide a ladder for entry and exit into excavations 4 feet or more in depth. ^{1926.651(c)(2)}
- Slings used to lift vaults must be inspected and labeled with capacity rating. ^{1926.251(a)}
- Employees must not be permitted underneath loads handled by lifting or digging equipment. ^{1926.651(e)}
- Open graves that are left unattended must be barricaded to prevent an accidental fall into the opening. ^{1926.501(b)(7), 520 CMR 14.00}
- Employees must be trained on trench safety. ^{1926.21(b)(2)}

Regulations:

1-Massachusetts 454 CMR 25.00 requires all public sector employers to comply with OSHA standards.

The Department of Labor Standards has jurisdiction for enforcement of OSHA standards at municipal cemeteries.

2-OSHA 29 CFR 1926.652 requires all employers to provide cave-in protection in all trench excavations. In excavations less than 5 feet deep, an employer must demonstrate that no cave-in hazards exist in order to waive the requirement for a cave-in protective system.

For more information visit our website at www.mass.gov/dols/wshp or contact us at safepublicworkplacemailbox@mass.gov