



Rhode Island Local Technical Assistance Program

Everyday Safety Talks

Trenching Checklist

Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries

BEFORE TRENCHING WORK BEGINS:

- Check soil conditions or other material to be excavated
- Check proximity to utilities, buildings and sources of vibrations
- Check with owners of utilities, service or transmission piping, etc., and arrange shutdown or relocation of facilities if necessary. Call Digsafe or your local State authority to arrange for marking the location of underground utilities
- Check for the location of overhead hazards and power lines
- Check for previously disturbed soil
- Check for trees, boulders or other hazards
- Check adequacy and availability of all equipment, including personal protective gear, shoring materials, signs, barricades and machinery

DURING TRENCHING OPERATIONS:

- Check for changing ground conditions particularly after rains. Check for possible oxygen deficiency or gaseous conditions
- Check adequacy of shoring and or sloping as work progresses. Check for maintenance of entrance and exit methods
- Check all sheeting, bracing, shoring and underpinning

AFTER THE TRENCH IS OPEN AND WORK IS UNDERWAY:

- Check sloping of banks, sides and walls in relation to depth of cut, water content of soil and vibration.
- Check entrance and exit methods (no more than 25 feet to a ladder). Check location for operation of heavy equipment, loaders, track hoes, and dump trucks.
- Check that excavated material is two feet or more from the edge of the opening.
- Check the adequacy of portable trench boxes or trench shields, if used. Check for correct positioning of cross braces or trench jacks to prevent sliding, falling or kickouts.

- * Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.

Everyday Safety Talks are published by the Rhode Island LTAP Program in cooperation with the National Local Technical Assistance Association and participating partner organizations.