

# 12-1-2025 - TBT – Excavation Requirements

## Fast facts about excavations:

- All excavations 4' or deeper require a means of access/egress every 25'.
- All excavations 5' deep or greater require a protective system. (sloping, shoring, shielding)
- Spoil piles must be kept 2' back from the edge of the excavation.
- Excavations 20' or greater require a protective system to be designed by a professional engineer.
- Test for hazardous atmospheres in trenches that are greater than 4' deep.
- A Competent Person must be present to inspect trenches daily and as conditions change to evaluate and eliminate excavation hazards.
- A Competent Person is an individual who can identify existing and predictable hazards or working conditions that are hazardous, soil types, and protective systems required.
- An excavation is any removal of soil. A trench is defined as a narrow excavation in relation to its' length and generally with its depth greater than its width.
- Dirt is heavy. One cubic yard of soil can weigh as much as 3,000 pounds. (when wet)
- Excavations have many potential hazards. Cave-Ins, falls, falling loads, hazardous atmospheres, and hazards from mobile equipment are a few.
- Protective systems should take many things into consideration such as soil classification, depth of cut, water content in soil, weather, other operations, and underground facilities, to name a few.
- No matter how many trenching, shoring, and backfilling projects you or your crew has performed, each is unique.
- Never dig without a current utility locate. If you are unsure a locate has been performed for your project, call your supervisor.
- Soil types can be classified as A, B, or C and dictate how we protect workers in those excavations.
- All soil types shall be treated as class C (least stable) unless field testing performed by a Competent Person determines otherwise.

These facts serve to provide continuous training and awareness during excavation operations performed by SCS. Please refer to the SCS Safety Program, Excavation and Trenching section, Safety Portal, for further information and guidance.

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