

Excavation and Trenching Best Practices: For Operators

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PRE-EXCAVATION

- Obtain alignment sheets and/or proper drawings to adequately locate excavation location.
- Verify that the one call (811) has been made and that utilities are marked and depth verified before the commencement of digging activities.
- Verify the installation of high visibility markings of all underground crossings and structures.
- Conduct a walk around inspection of equipment checking all fluids and noting any items needing maintenance and repair.
- Ensure all critical repairs are performed before operation.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by the task being performed and as required per OSHA regulations.
- Ensure a spotter is used if there are overhead power lines, underground utilities or tight working conditions in the work area.
- Verify the competent person is on site.
- Ensure that the public will be protected from all open excavations.

EXCAVATION

- Follow the policies and procedures of the governing agency when crossing foreign utilities.
- Ensure a spotter is used if there are overhead power lines, underground utilities, or tight working conditions in the work area.
- Maintain a 2-foot lateral open area from excavation for all material, equipment, and spoil.
- Assure that proper sloping, benching, or shoring techniques are utilized in excavations of five feet or greater in depth.
- Check for and remove any accumulation of water in the excavation.
- If the excavation is 4 feet or greater in depth, ensure means of proper egress within a maximum lateral travel distance of 25 feet.
- Ensure adequate ground cover of other utilities and crossings.
- Protective systems for excavations of 20 feet or greater in depth must be designed by a registered professional engineer.
- Ensure that the competent person inspects and documents the excavation checklist at the beginning of each day, each shift change, and after every change of weather (rain storm).



- Ensure the following Best Practices are being followed if the excavation is occupied:
 - No employee shall enter any excavation until it has been determined by a competent person that the excavation has been dug in accordance with OSHA, State, and Local Standards.
 - Employees who work in and around excavations and trenches have been made aware of the hazards and correct work procedures associated with this type of work.

POST EXCAVATION

- Check and comply with company specifications for backfilling.
- Ensure the protection and support of existing utilities and structures.
- Ensure prior to backfilling the removal of equipment, materials, or other debris generated in the process of work activities.