Tool Box Talks

American Safety Consultants, LLC
866.525.3608

EXCAVATION TRAINING FOR THE COMPETENT PERSON

COMPETENT PERSON

OSHA standards require that trenches be inspected daily and as conditions change by a competent person prior to worker entry to ensure elimination of excavation hazards. A competent person is an individual who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards or working conditions that are hazardous, unsanitary, or dangerous to employees and who is authorized to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate or control these hazards and conditions.

Currently, there are no set standards governing all the responsibilities of Competent Persons, therefore it is up to employers to determine and designate properly qualified individuals to serve as Competent Persons for their jobsites. OSHA does have a number of standards that reference Competent Person responsibilities – these can be found at http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/competentperson/standards.html.

In addition, individuals serving as Competent Persons should be mindful of the following basic dangers and knowledgeable of the protective systems required for excavating operations:

DANGERS

In the construction industry, excavation is considered one of the most dangerous operations. OSHA defines an excavation as any man-made cut, cavity, trench, or depression in the earth's surface formed by earth removal. The hazards and risks that occur with highest incidence in excavation are: cave-ins, falls, falling loads, hazardous atmospheres, and incidents involving mobile equipment.

PROTECTIVE SYSTEMS

There are different types of protective systems. **Sloping** involves cutting back the trench wall at an angle inclined away from the excavation. **Shoring** requires installing aluminum hydraulic or other types of supports to prevent soil movement and cave-ins. **Shielding** protects workers by using trench boxes or other types of supports to prevent soil cave-ins. Designing a protective system can be complex because you must consider many factors: soil classification, depth of cut, water content of soil, changes due to weather or climate, surcharge loads (e.g., spoil, other materials to be used in the trench) and other operations in the vicinity.

How this topic applies to this job: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Date: _____ Jobsite/Project #: _____
Supervisor/Foreman (print name): _____ Signature: _____

Attendees: Print Name/Signature (use back if necessary):

Name: _____	Signature: _____
Name: _____	Signature: _____
Name: _____	Signature: _____
Name: _____	Signature: _____
Name: _____	Signature: _____
Name: _____	Signature: _____