

**COURSE
PREVIEW**

COMPETENT PERSON MANUAL

A guide to industry standards, practices,
and regulatory requirements for OSHA
Construction Industry Regulations 29 CFR
1926, Subpart P - Excavations

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LOOK FOR THE HARDHAT



Throughout this Manual we have included important information in an outlined box like this one with the title **“Additional Info on...”** We have marked these places with the hardhat symbol above. Keep an eye out for this vital extra information.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

TrenchSafety and Supply, Inc. designs its training programs to acquaint participants with current industry standards, accepted practices, and regulatory requirements. However:

- 1.) Regulatory requirements, as well as best-industry practices, constantly change. These materials address some, but not all, of those regulatory requirements and best-industry practices as of the date of publication (see footer at the bottom of each page). Participants who are responsible for employee safety must stay abreast of those changes.
- 2.) Each work site offers different safety challenges and requirements. It is impossible for any training program to address every situation that may be confronted in the field. Therefore, participants should continue to study safety training materials and other safety information, and should *always apply “Safety First” practices and techniques at the work site.*

TrenchSafety and Supply, Inc. certifies participants’ attendance at its training programs. However, TrenchSafety and Supply, Inc. cannot attest to any individual participant’s proficiency and competence, since those factors depend upon:

- 1.) How well the participant understood, absorbed, and retained the information that he or she reviewed during the training program and was contained in the training program materials, and
- 2.) The participant’s continued study and practice of techniques that insure safety on *all* work sites.

Construction techniques and equipment usage must be in accordance with all governmental regulations and manufacturers’ instructions. All orders placed with TrenchSafety, for goods and services, including training, are subject to the terms, conditions, and warranty limitations contained in TrenchSafety’s Rental and Sales Agreements.

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Useful Information

Various newsletters, checklists, reprints, etc.

COURSE OVERVIEW

First, a few important facts...

- As many as 400 workers are killed each year in trenches and excavations across the U.S.
- Several thousand workers are seriously injured.
- Most of the trenches and excavations are relatively shallow (5' to 15' deep)
- Many of the workers have not had training

Many people don't appreciate the weight of soil. One cubic foot of soil weighs between 90 and 140 pounds. Just one cubic yard of soil (27 cubic feet), weighs between 2,430 and 3,780 pounds.



Average soil weighs 90-140 pounds per cubic foot. To give you an idea of how that "little" cave-in will feel, think about this: TrenchSafety's Ford Expedition shown above weighs almost 6,000 pounds. That's only 2 cubic yards of soil. Can you imagine that truck sitting on your chest?

OSHA's Subpart P was specifically developed to address the hazards associated with trenches and excavations.

OSHA's definition of a "cave-in" has two parts:

1. "The separation of a mass of soil or rock material from the side of an excavation, or the loss of soil from under a trench shield or support system, *and*
2. its sudden movement into the excavation, either by falling or sliding, in sufficient quantity so that it could entrap, bury, or otherwise injure and immobilize a person."



Even workers in shallow trenches need protection from cave-ins.

The Negative Results of a Cave-In

There are many negative results of a cave-in, particularly if workers are seriously injured or killed. Of course, there is a significant impact on the injured workers and their families. There can also be large direct and indirect expenses associated with the cave-in for the employer. There are the OSHA citations, which are sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars. And finally, because trenches are such a high priority with OSHA, criminal charges can be (and have been) filed against company owners and managers as a result of workers being seriously injured or killed in a trench.

What is the True Cost of an Accident?

At least two very real losses are usually clearly felt by contractors and utilities whenever there is an accident on any job site:

Monetary Losses

- Loss of skilled, experienced workers.
- Loss of profit from such workers.
- Loss of production.
- Training expense for new personnel to take over for the injured party.
- Re-training expense for the injured worker to handle another job.
- Payment of compensation.
- Legal costs.
- Awards paid out for lawsuits.
- Settlement awards.
- Increased workman's compensation premiums.
- Increased general liability insurance premiums.
- Federal OSHA fines for non-compliance.
- State and local fines for non-compliance.

Time Losses

- Time investigating the cause of the accident.
- Time processing the accident reports.
- Time preparing personnel reports.
- Time attending depositions, hearings, and trials.
- Time for additional training and supervision of new employees.
- Time for mental stress and fatigue due to concern for worker family and friends.

Why is safety so important in trenches and excavations?

- It's the right thing to do.
- No one wants a co-worker or an employee injured or killed on the job.
- It's good for business.
- It improves employee morale.
- It helps a contractor or utility attract employees.
- It's helps better control direct and indirect costs.
- It's the law!

Employers have a legal obligation to provide a safe workplace for all employees.

The “Competent Person”

OSHA requires that a “Competent Person” is present on a job site whenever workers are exposed in an excavation.

There are two parts to the definition of a “Competent Person.”

1. “One who *is capable* of identifying existing or predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions that are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, *and*
2. “One who *has the authorization* to take prompt correct measures to eliminate them.”



When done properly, as shown here, trench and other excavation work can be safe!

OSHA goes on to say:

“When applied to trenching or excavation operations, the ‘Competent Person’ must have specific training in, and be knowledgeable about, soils analysis, the use of protective systems, and the requirements of this standard.”

The Objective of Today’s Training

To help prepare you to serve as a “Competent Person” on a job site.

The responsibilities of a “Competent Person” include:

1. Authority to stop work (1926.651(k)(2))
2. Inspections of excavations (1926.651(k)(l))
 - Inspect daily for indications of:
 - > Evidence of possible cave-ins,
 - > Failure of protective systems,
 - > Hazardous atmospheres, and
 - > Other hazardous conditions.
 - Frequency of inspections:
 - > Prior to start of work
 - > As needed throughout the shift
 - > After rainstorms
 - > After other hazard increasing occurrences
3. Testing for hazardous atmospheres when such atmospheres exist or could reasonably be expected to exist (1926.651(g)(l)(i))
4. Inspection of material or equipment if damaged to determine if usable (1926.652(d)(3))
5. Monitoring of water removal equipment and operations (1926.651(h)(2))
6. Visual and manual tests of the soil (1926 Appendix A)

The material in this course will be presented in four sections:

1. Introduction to Subpart P
2. General Requirements
3. Soil Classification
4. Selection of Protective Systems

Frequently Asked Questions about “Competent Person” Training...

Q – Let’s say that I’ve completed this course. Will I be certified to serve as a “Competent Person”?

A – NO, because OSHA does not provide specific certification criteria. No organizations offer “Competent Person” certification.

Q – OK, who determines whether someone is qualified to serve as a “Competent Person”?

A – That is the employer’s responsibility. In addition, the employer has to grant the “Competent Person” the authority to take prompt and corrective action to correct unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous working conditions. Without the training and the authority, a person IS NOT considered to be a “Competent Person”.

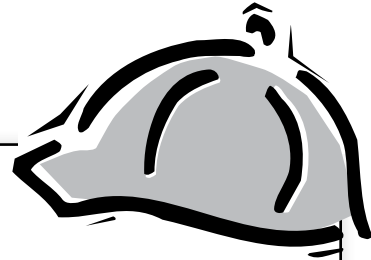
Q – How often is refresher training required?

A – OSHA says that all workers must be properly trained by their employers to do their jobs safely. Most safety professionals say that because of the importance of trenching and excavation safety — and the consequences of a cave-in (serious injury or death) — a “Competent Person” needs at least annual refresher training. That is not a specific requirement in the OSHA standard, and will be determined by the employer.

A “Competent Person” will also need refresher training, or additional training, if there are indications of safety problems, or changes in work-place conditions or responsibilities.

Q – I recently completed a “Competent Person” course for personal fall-arrest systems. Does that mean I am properly trained to serve as a “Competent Person” on a trenching site?

A – NO. Many OSHA standards make reference to “Competent Persons,” and training requirements vary with each standard. To serve as a “Competent Person” on a trenching or excavation site, you must be specifically trained and be knowledgeable of soils analysis, use of protective systems, and the requirements of OSHA’s trenching and excavation standard.



This Competent Person Manual is a “MUST-HAVE” reference book for contractors, sub-contractors, utilities . . . anyone involved in any type of excavation work!

Included in the Competent Person Manual:

- **83 Helpful Photographs and Illustrations**
- **22 Detailed “Decision Trees” and Practical Data Tables**
- **14 Frequently Asked Questions That Help Clarify Every Aspect of Trench Safety**
- **7 “Additional Info” Sidebars That Provide Even More Vital Information**
- **The General Requirements of the OSHA Standards** – starting on page 1-5
- **The Processes for Soils Classification** – starting on page 1-15
- **Protective Systems Options** – starting on page 1-25
- **Reprints of the Actual OSHA Standards** – starting on page 2-1
- **OSHA Interpretations and Clarifications of the Standards** – starting on page 3-1
- **Safety Checklists and Sample Forms** – see Section 4
- **Reprinted Newsletters and Magazine Articles Loaded with Top-Notch Information, Photos, and More** – see Section 4

This Manual works fine as an invaluable stand-alone reference book, but it is also a companion volume to the popular **“Competent Person Training” programs** offered by TrenchSafety and Supply.

For information on this and other of their training courses, contact TrenchSafety and Supply at **(800) 865-5801** or **www.TrenchSafety.com**

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