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## **A Cooperative Effort**

*The Kahnawake Occupational Safety and Health Office along with Mohawk Self Insurance are working closely to reduce workplace injuries. Workplace injuries cost employers, employees, insurance providers and families thousands of dollars each year. By providing the tools through promoting safety, providing training and or training materials and continued safety awareness, together we can reduce workplace injuries.*



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# **“Safety” Is No Accident**



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**Mohawk Council of Kahnawake  
Community Protection Unit  
Kahnawake Occupational Safety and Health**

## **Excavation and Trenching**



# **Do You Dig**

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# What is an Excavation and Trench?



An excavation is any man-made cut, cavity, trench or depression in the earth's surface formed by earth removal. Excavations can include anything from cellars to highways, excavations are common in many construction and maintenance projects and are inherently dangerous. A trench is an excavation which is deeper than it is wide, and no greater than fifteen (15) feet wide. Numerous accidents happen every year during trenching operations. Trenching and excavation work presents serious hazards to all workers involved. Cave-ins pose the greatest risk and are much more likely than other excavation-related accidents to result in worker fatalities. Other potential hazards include falls, falling loads, hazardous atmospheres, and incidents involving mobile equipment.

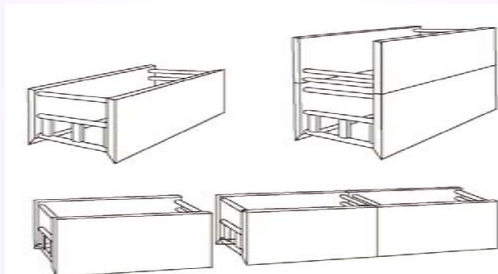
## Preplanning

Prior to commencing excavation work of any kind, the site should be inspected to allow for precautionary measures. A few simple precautions can eliminate most of the risk associated with trenching operations. Many on-the-job accidents result directly from inadequate initial planning. Preplanning can save you time, money and accidents such as excavation cave-ins.

## Safety Factors to Consider

- Traffic,
- Proximity and physical conditions of nearby structures,
- Soil,
- Surface and ground water,
- Location of the water table,
- Overhead and underground utilities, and Weather.

You can determine these and other conditions through jobsite studies, observations, test borings for soil type or conditions, and consultations with local officials and utility companies. This information will help you determine the amount, kind, and cost of safety equipment you will need to perform the work in the safest manner possible.



## Worker Information

It is important to discuss with all employees involved in the excavation work, what procedures and safe work practices will be used. You may want to emphasize specific rules to help reduce the risk of on-the-job injuries. These rules may include requirements that workers;

- Follow safe work practices
- Wear or use prescribed protective gear and equipment correctly
- Remove or minimize all surface obstacles at the worksite that may create a hazard
- Wear warning vests or other reflective or high-visibility garments that you provide when they are exposed to vehicular traffic
- Operate equipment only if they have been trained properly in its use and alerted to its potential hazards

## Competent Person

The senior supervisor will designate who the authorized competent person shall be for the project before any excavation work begins.

A Competent Person is defined as: One who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings, or working conditions which is unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has the authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them.