

**Massachusetts
Division of
Occupational Safety**



**Massachusetts
Department of Public
Safety**



Trenches are recognized as one of the most hazardous construction conditions for workers and the public.



Trench collapses cause dozens of fatalities and hundreds of injuries each year.

Prevent Trench/Excavation Collapses!

OSHA Highlights: www.osha.gov

- ❖ 5 feet and deeper requires protective systems (shoring, sloping, or trench box)
- ❖ Competent person required to provide inspections to trench and protective system
- ❖ Safe means of access/egress every 25 feet when trench is 4 feet or greater
- ❖ Keep excavated material (spoils) more than 2 feet from edge of excavation
- ❖ Identify location of utilities by calling DigSafe 1-888-344-7233

DPS Highlights: www.mass.gov/dps

- ❖ A trench permit must be obtained from the municipality prior to making a trench 3 feet or greater
- ❖ The trench permit must be posted in plain view on the site of the trench
- ❖ All regulated trenches must be either attended, covered, barricaded or backfilled
- ❖ Excavators who use hoisting equipment must be licensed by MA Dept of Public Safety

*Don't forget other potentially fatal hazards exist, including **asphyxiation** due to lack of oxygen in a confined space, inhalation of **toxic fumes**, **drowning**, etc. **Electrocution or explosions** can occur when workers contact underground utilities.*

The Division of Occupational Safety (DOS) offers a free consultation service designed to help private employers recognize and control safety and health hazards at their worksites, improve their safety and health program, and assist in training employees.

Massachusetts Division of Occupational Safety

617-969-7177

www.mass.gov/dos/consult

December 2007