• Three soil types, plus rock, determine the slope or safety measures to take. A “competent person” must know how to determine the soil type and the sloping or shoring.

• A “competent person” needs to be in charge daily at sites where employees are exposed.

• When an excavation is deeper than 20 feet, an engineer also needs to be involved.

• When mobile equipment is operating nearby, barricades or other warning devices should protect the excavation/trench area.

• Walkways over an excavation/trench must meet the OSHA guardrail specifications.

• OSHA standards require a stairway, ladder, ramp, or other safe means of egress to be located in trench excavations that are 4 feet (1.22 m) or more deep, so that no more than 25 feet (7.62 m) of lateral travel is required for employees.

• The trench or excavation must be sloped properly or benched when 4 feet deep. The spoil pile needs to be at least 2 feet from the edge.
Additional Information for Presenters
Review the information provided on the reverse side of this safety tip sheet. Please refrain from reading the information verbatim—paraphrase it instead.

OSHA Standards That May Apply:
1926.650, 651 & 652 and Subpart “P” Appendixes

Links:
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
www.osha.gov/SLTC/trenchingexcavation

National Utility Contractors Association
www.nuca.com

Metro Safety Consultants, Inc.
www.metrosafety.com

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