



U.S. Department of Labor Updates National Emphasis Program on Trenching and Excavation Safety

Trade Release U.S. Department of Labor

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has updated the National Emphasis Program (NEP) on preventing trenching and excavation collapses in response to a recent spike in trenching fatalities.

OSHA’s NEP will increase education and enforcement efforts while its inspectors will record trenching and excavation inspections in a national reporting system, and each area OSHA office will develop outreach programs.

“Removing workers from and helping workers identify trenching hazards is critical,” said Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Loren Sweatt. “OSHA will concentrate the full force of enforcement and compliance assistance resources to help ensure that employers are addressing these serious hazards.”

The emphasis program began October 1, 2018, with a three-month period of education and prevention outreach. During this period, OSHA will continue to respond to complaints, referrals, hospitalizations, and fatalities. Enforcement activities will begin after the outreach period and remain in effect until canceled. OSHA-approved State Plans are expected to have enforcement procedures that are at least as effective as those in this instruction.

OSHA has developed a series of compliance assistance resources to help keep workers safe from trenching and excavation hazards. The trenching and excavation webpage provides information on trenching hazards and solutions.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA’s role is to help ensure these conditions for America’s working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit:

<https://www.osha.gov/news/newsreleases/trade/10022018>

www.osha.gov.

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