

# Digging Deep Into Safety: Tools. Training. Resources.

Trench collapses can be deadly. Each year, preventable trenching and excavation fatalities in the construction industry occur far too frequently. In 2024, 15 workers lost their lives due to trench collapses – the same tragic number reported in 2023. In the first three months of 2025, seven workers died in trenches in the construction industry and another seven in the mining industry. These incidents often occur when workers are buried under thousands of pounds of soil, making escape nearly impossible. Rescue efforts require highly specialized first responders and are extraordinarily difficult.

Preventing these tragedies requires a collective effort from employers, workers, advocates, the safety and health community, and government agencies. June is Trench Safety Month, and a time to raise awareness about the dangers and the best practices and resources that address them.

## **WE OFTEN HEAR...**

“I’ve been doing it this way for years and never had an incident, why should I spend money on shoring?”

## **WE ALSO HEAR...**

“Of course I care about the safety of my employees, but the bottom line has to work.”

## **HERE’S THE BOTTOM LINE: “Use the Tools”**

The key rule for the safety of your workers *and* your business is easy to remember: “Use the Tools.”

Turns out, a poor safety decision is a poor business decision. Whether you are a small, medium, or large company – a contractor or a sub-contractor – selecting and using the appropriate safety tools for every job protects lives and livelihoods. Regardless of the job size, appropriate equipment is available for every need.

Experts find that year-end savings from using safety tools exceed the cost many times over of foregoing equipment. Of course, that’s before factoring in additional direct costs, such as workers compensation, fines, and penalties, and indirect costs, including interviewing, hiring, and training, associated with a preventable injury or death.

“Slope it, Shore It, and Shield It” is a formula that ensures everyone involved in trenching and excavation operations stays safe from preventable and needless harm!

## **WE ALSO HEAR...**

“I’d like to be safe, but where can I find the training and resources?”

While “Use the Tools” is one three-word solution for excavation shoring safety, two others also apply: “Use the Training” and “Use the Resources.”



## Free Training and Resources

The [North American Excavation Shoring Association](#) (NAXSA), representing global experts in the safe and efficient use of excavation shoring equipment and practices, has partnered with the [National Utility Contractors Association](#) (NUCA), which serves the U.S. utility construction and excavation industry. Together with five other leading construction organizations, they are members of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's [Partners for Safe Trenching and Excavation Operations Alliance](#). This Alliance promotes best practices that reduce the risks of trenching and excavation work.

Through training and safety initiatives, participation in the Alliance, and other activities, NAXSA and NUCA deliver lifesaving information and expertise throughout the many facets of the industry. Every year, thousands of contractors, subcontractors, workers, and safety officials, receive free training through each organization's offerings, which range from onsite and online training initiatives to safety events. NAXSA, NUCA, and OSHA, all offer practical and easily accessible resources for *your* excavation shoring project. Use the links below to access frequently asked questions, tips, podcasts, and other materials, including presentations by experts and live trench safety demonstrations.

- [\*\*NAXSA Resources\*\*](#)
- [\*\*NUCA Resources\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Trenching and Excavation Safety Taskforce \(T.E.S.T.\) Resources\*\*](#)
- [\*\*OSHA's Trenching and Excavation Safety and Health Topics Resources\*\*](#). For further assistance, employers may also contact their [local OSHA office](#) or the [On-Site Consultation Program](#).

## CONCLUSION

Trenching and excavation injuries and fatalities are preventable when the right steps are taken. Prioritizing safety is not just a good practice – it's a responsibility. **Use the Tools. Use the Training. Use the Resources.** These simple actions can make all the difference in protecting lives and ensuring everyone goes home safely at the end of each day.