

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE REQUIRED FOR TRENCH/EXCAVATION COLLAPSE

The new OHS Regulations 2017 explicitly requires the develop of emergency procedures if there is a risk of a person becoming engulfed by soil or other material when construction work is being performed. Rescues in these circumstances need to occur quickly and may involve a risk of further ground collapse which can put both trapped people and their rescuers at risk.

OHS Regulations 2017, Division 2 Control of Risk, section 331 Emergency Procedure

The employer or self-employed person must ensure that the emergency procedures—

(a) so far as is reasonably practicable, enable—

(i) the rescue of a person in the event that the person becomes engulfed by soil or other material; and

(ii) the provision of first aid to a person who has become engulfed; and

(b) can be carried out immediately after a person becomes, or is likely to become, engulfed.

SAMPLE TRENCH / EXCAVATION COLLAPSE EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Responding Emergency Service – Ambulance

1. Assess the scene to determine what has happened and who may be trapped
2. Alert Site Management/Call 000. Identify the number of victims, their location, and the nature of their injuries – pass this information on to emergency services
3. **Do not** enter the trench or excavation
4. Stop the movement of all plant and eliminate all other possible sources of vibration within 100m
5. **Do not** use the excavator bucket to pull people out
6. Move bystanders away from the area. Put up a barricade if required.
7. Assist victims out of excavation/trench who are not trapped by the collapse, but **DO NOT ENTER** the excavation/trench at any time until it has been deemed safe to do so by a competent person. Administer first aid where possible without getting into collapsed area.
8. Send someone to find the first aider on site and first aid kit.
9. Send a person to each site entrance point to direct emergency services when they arrive.
10. Assess any other potential hazards i.e. possible damage to underground services, gas leaks etc and provide information to emergency services.
11. Turn off any known electrical, gas or other services in the vicinity.
12. Assess the availability of shoring equipment available (timbers, steel beams, shoring etc) on site and have available close by for emergency services
13. Follow instruction of emergency services

IMPORTANT NOTE: All relevant workers must be made aware of the emergency procedure. Consultation should take place with the relevant contractors and workers before finalising the procedure. Consider attaching the procedure to relevant SWMS's to ensure workers are inducted into it.