



ARCO SAFE TOOL BOX TALKS

Excavation – Citations

1926 Subpart P, Excavations



Next to falls, excavations are the second leading cause of fatality on construction sites. And while not in the top ten most cited standards, citations from OSHA relating to excavations can add up quickly.

First off, every citation involving an excavation has to do with the likely death or serious harm of a worker. This makes almost any citation a “serious” citation, which comes with an up to \$7,000 fine, and the possibility of being added to the SVEP list (more on that later).

Second you must have a “competent” person when conducting an excavation. That means this person must be trained in the hazards associated with excavations and working inside them. Since you must have a competent person on site, and he/she should know better, a violation could easily be considered “willful”. Which means you willing did not follow OSHA standards, this has with it a \$5,000 - \$70,000 fine, and up to \$250,000 court fine and 6 months in jail if someone is hurt.

Combine “serious” and “willful” violations and OSHA can quickly add you to its “Serious Violator Enforcement Program” (or SVEP). This will put your company under extra scrutiny by OSHA, causing more in depth inspections more often, which can lead to even more fines.

Long story short; have a competent person, dig safely and always properly bench, or slope back. Use proper trench boxes and always have egress available to work safe and stay away from citations.