Brieser CONSTRUCTION

Toolbox Talk



Excavations, Part 1 - DATE 10/11/26 – 10/17/26

This is part 1 of a 4 part series of Toolbox Talks intended to increase awareness and outline expectations for work at Brieser construction.

This week we will discuss the foundation of trench safety: ***Fast Facts***

- All excavations 4’ or deeper require a means of access/egress every 25’.
- All excavations 5’ deep or greater require a protective system. (sloping, shoring, shielding)
- Spoil piles must be kept 2’ back from the edge of the excavation.
- Excavations 20’ or greater require a protective system to be designed by a professional engineer.
- Test for hazardous atmospheres in trenches that are greater than 4’ deep.
- A Competent Person must be present to inspect trenches daily and as conditions change to evaluate and eliminate excavation hazards.
- A Competent Person is an individual who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards or working conditions that are hazardous, soil types, and protective systems required.
- An excavation is any removal of soil. A trench is defined as a narrow excavation in relation to its’ length and generally with its depth greater than its width.
- Dirt is heavy. One cubic yard of soil can weight as much as 3,000 pounds.
- Excavations have many potential hazards. Cave Ins, Falls, falling loads, hazardous atmospheres, and hazards from mobile equipment are a few.
- Protective systems should take many things into consideration: soil classification, depth of cut, water content in soil, weather, other operations, and underground facilities, to name a few.
- No matter how many trenching, shoring and backfilling project you or your crew has performed, each is unique, and we need to plan daily as part of our Pre Task Discussion.
- Never dig without a current utility locate. If you are unsure if a locate has been performed for your project, call your supervisor. All jobs that involve excavation must have a current One Call Ticket (JULIE) in place.
- Soil types can be classified as A, B, or C and dictate how we protect workers in those excavations.
- All excavations at Brieser construction shall be treated as class C (least stable) unless field testing performed by a Competent Person determines otherwise.

Next week we will get further into the details of soil classification and the different methods that can be used.



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