

Preventing accidents in excavations

➤ Manager

- 1) Ensure that excavations are made safe, by trench supports, battering back, fencing or other equally effective measures
- 2) Be aware that there is no safe minimum depth of excavation
- 3) Provide training for your staff which highlights the risks
- 4) Ensure that adequate inspections, at least weekly, and after bad weather, are carried out on all excavations
- 5) Provide competent supervision
- 6) Ensure that plant does not work too close to the edge of an excavation

➤ Worker

- 1) Never go into an unsupported trench where there is a risk of collapse
- 2) Never work outside the protection of trench boxes or trench supports
- 3) Keep plant a safe distance from the excavation edge
- 4) Never work underneath an excavator
- 5) Be alert to risks from underground services or undermining adjacent structures
- 6) Maintain fencing and other safety measures in order to protect others

➤ Planning - Prioritising decisions and managing risks

- 1) Always batter back edges or support the sides of excavations to reduce risk of collapse
- 2) Control plant movements around excavations and ensure that top blocks are used where necessary
- 3) Ensure safe means of access and egress into and out of the excavation
- 4) Ensure that excavations are adequately protected by fencing to protect the public and other workers
- 5) Provide information, instruction and training to support your safe system of work.

➤ Links

The screenshot shows the HSE website interface. The main heading is 'Structural stability during excavations'. Below it, there is a section titled 'What you need to do' which states: 'The law says you must prevent danger to workers in or near excavations. To maintain the required precautions, a competent person must inspect excavation supports or battering at the start of the working shift and at other specified times. No work should take place until the excavation is safe. Commercial clients must provide certain information to contractors before work begins. This should include relevant information on: Ground conditions, underground structures or water courses, and the location of existing services. This information should be used to during the planning and preparation for excavation work. Key issues are:'. There is also a sidebar with navigation links like 'Home', 'News', 'Guidance', 'About us', 'About HSE', and 'Contact us'.



The screenshot shows an 'HSE information sheet' titled 'Inspection and reports'. It is a 'Construction Information Sheet No. 4 (Rev 1)'. The sheet is divided into 'Introduction' and 'Reports' sections. The 'Introduction' section states: 'This information sheet sets out the specific requirements for: the inspection of: excavations of any depth, coffereams and caissons, working places of work (which prevent falls without the action or use of other equipment eg permanent guard rails on a fall edge), work platforms (eg scaffolds, mobile platforms), collective fall arrest systems (eg nets, airbags, self-arresting systems), personal fall protection systems (eg work positioning, rope access, work restraint and fall arrest systems)'. The 'Reports' section states: 'The result of an inspection must be recorded and reported. If an inspection is of: an excavation, coffeream or caisson or a working platform which is 2 metres or above in height and is undertaken after installation or assembly or to comply with the former this inspection regime the competent person must: complete the inspection report before the end of the working period and provide a copy of the report to the person for whom the inspection was carried out within 24 hours. The person receiving the report must: keep it at the site where the inspection was carried out until construction work is completed.' The sheet includes the HSE logo and a 'Return form' button.

Guidance on Inspecting Excavations
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cis47.pdf>

Download guidance on protecting excavations from vehicles
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg144.pdf>

Online Guidance from HSE Structural Stability during excavations
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/excavations.htm#collapse>

➤ Record your Site Briefing Here

Who has been briefed

I confirm that I have briefed these people on the Key points of the HSE Step3 guidance note on behaviours that can prevent accidents

Signed off by

➤ Concerns Raised At The Briefing

➤ Changes implemented or actions planned

➤ SLAM

STOP work if you find yourself in danger - this is your right in Law

Look around you before taking any action, is anybody else at risk

Assess the situation, take a few minutes to think through the actions you should take to put things right

Manage the risks as the job goes on, anticipate and control risk before the problem emerges