



# Safety Alert

## Excavator use near trenches

18 March 2021

The following pages of this safety alert were issued by:

**Cumbria County Council**

## Highways Transport and Fleet Operations

### SAFETY ALERT – 039

#### Excavator use near trenches

##### Overview

A recent RIDDOR incident involving an excavator collapsing into an unsecured trench could have resulted in fatal or life changing injuries, as well as damage to property and vehicles. While this incident is still under investigation, the Corporate H&S team want to issue the following guidance to prevent similar occurrences. Further communications will be issued following the completed investigation.

##### Risks working near to trenches

There is a real and present danger from working near to or alongside trenches, which includes:

- People or objects falling into excavations
- Loose/dislodged material falling onto operative's present within trenches
- Collapsing excavations



Ensure all trenches and excavations are inspected at the start of each shift and following any adverse event (near miss/incident) that may have impacted upon their stability.





##### Required pre-work checks for All Excavator works near Trenches:

For all current and upcoming work highways project, construction or maintenance work involving excavators or similar heavy pieces of machinery, please stop works and address the following safety behaviors prior to continuing with the job:

- Ensure all survey information is known and communicated regarding ground conditions of the site, any underground structures/water courses and existing services
- Ensure all trenches are appropriately barriered off to prevent pedestrian (operative or public) and vehicle access
- Is appropriate temporary support in place for all trenches on site? Ensure all trenches are shored/battered appropriately
- Review RAMS for the activity taking place, and ensure all operatives are appropriately inducted, trained and in possession of certs. /tickets/ etc. for the work they will be doing on site
- Review Traffic Management Plans, including parking arrangements, to ensure no vehicles are parked or left near to trenches/ground at risk of collapse
- Ensure the project/site manager in charge of the site and operations is present and aware of all traffic movements.
- If any damage/accident or near miss occurs to an excavator/heavy plant/equipment, ensure it is checked again to be in good working order
  - o Refer to checklist: HSE Construction Information Sheet No 47(rev1), see below.

##### KEY POINTS ARE:

NEVER		ALWAYS	
	<b>Vehicle parking</b> – Never park / leave excavators or heavy machinery next to trenches.		<b>Traffic &amp; pedestrian management</b> – Always ensure TMP and pedestrian segregation is in place for working near trenches and heavy machinery.

	<b>Trenches</b> – Never allow a trench to be unsecured (not secured/segregated and not battered/shored)		<b>Trenches</b> – Always ensure all trenches are appropriately secured: battered and shored.
	<b>Competency</b> – Never use a piece of plant/equipment if you are not fully trained and competent		<b>Vehicle management</b> – Always ensure competent banksmen are in place for heavy plant and vehicle movements on site

## Further information -

[Construction - Excavator industry health & safety \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/excavator/)

[Construction - Structural stability excavations health & safety \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/structural-stability-excavations/)

[Construction Information Sheet 47 \(rev1\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/information-sheet-47/)