



# EXCAVATION ON SITE – FAILURE TO PROTECT WORKERS

WLD.029

## Description of Event

*An excavator was left perched on top of an excavation with the front tracks left hanging over the excavation*

### Population at Risk

Construction Workers

### Hazardous Activity and Residual Risk Description

- An excavator working on the edge of an unsupported excavation exposed the plant operator and the ground workers to the potential for a catastrophic ground failure leading to serious injury or death.
- Site Inspector invoked their 'Stop Work Authority' and work was suspended until a discussion was held with the workers to ensure adequate ground support was provided.
- The workers had assumed that the clay ground would be sufficient to support the excavator.

### Potential consequences of this event

- Workers on site could have been seriously injured or killed by the falling excavator in the event that the excavation gave way.

### Safety Hub [Alert Database](#)

- Category – Excavation Safety, Sub-Category 1 – Excavators, Sub-Category 2 – Competence and Positive intervention has 2 alerts with no injuries or fatalities.



Image showing the excavator perched with its front tracks on the edge of the excavation.

## Potential Mitigation Measures



### Design

- Consider an alternative storage system.
- Temporary Works Designer should have been engaged to consider the requirement for trench support.

### Construction

- Contractor to ensure there is competent site supervision.
- The contractor should ensure that the temporary works proposals are prepared by a suitably competent and experienced person.
- All staff should be properly trained and be prepared to 'stop work' in the event that any form of unsafe activity is being carried out.
- Ensure that work is always properly planned and that the correct plant and equipment are supplied to ensure that the health and safety of all workers are considered at all times.

### Maintenance/Operations

- The maintenance contractor should follow the same forms of good practice as highlighted above.

## Further Guidance and Reading

- [RtB 26 – Safety By Design](#)
- [RtB 23 – Site Health and Safety Inductions](#)
- [RtB 29 – Supervision](#)
- [Excavations – HSE Guidance](#)



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