

**University of Delaware**  
**Environmental Health and Safety Protocol**

**Section:** Construction/Facilities Safety

**Protocol Name:** Excavation Safety

**Origination Date:** March 12, 2019

**Revisions:** None

**Protocol Number:** C-03

**I. SCOPE OF PROTOCOL**

This protocol addresses excavation, trenching, and soil moving work and applies to all University departments. All University contractors must have a separate written excavation, trenching and soil-moving plan which meets or exceeds the standards of this protocol.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

**A. Excavation**

1. Any man-made cut, cavity, trench, or depression in an earth surface formed by earth removal. An excavation is much wider than it is deep.

**B. Trench**

1. A narrow excavation (in relation to its length) made below the surface of the ground. In general, the depth is greater than the width, but the width of a trench (measured at the bottom) is not greater than 15 feet (4.6 m). If forms or other structures are installed or constructed in an excavation so as to reduce the dimension measured from the forms or structure to the side of the excavation to 15 feet (4.6 m) or less (measured at the bottom of the excavation), the excavation is also considered to be a trench

**C. OSHA Competent Person**

1. One who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them

**III. PROTOCOL STATEMENT**

- A. The primary hazard of trenching and excavation is employee injury from collapse in or near the excavated area. Additional hazards include working with heavy machinery; manual handling of materials; working in proximity to traffic; electrical hazards from overhead and buried utilities, such as natural gas and electrical lines.
- B. All excavation and trenching shall be constructed in accordance with procedures established by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety and be overseen by a competent person.
- C. No person shall enter a trench or other excavated space except in accordance with procedures established by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety.
- D. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety may evaluate excavated spaces and trenches for compliance with this protocol.
- E. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety may order the evacuation of any trench or excavated space on campus at any time, including those excavated by University contractors.

- F. Excavations may be considered permit required confined spaces when they exceed 4 feet in depth. See Confined Space protocol and procedures.

#### **IV. PROGRAM STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

- A. OSHA standard 1926 Subpart P “Excavation”
- B. OSHA standard 1926.501(b)(7) Subpart M “Duty to have fall protection-Excavations”
- C. ANSI/ASSP standard A10.12 - 2016 “ Safety Requirements for Excavation”
- D. Department of Environmental Health and Safety procedure Excavation, Trenching, and Shoring”

For more information regarding this policy, contact the Department of Environmental Health and Safety 302-831-8475.