
29 C.F.R. § 1926.651

Specific excavation requirements.

- (a) *Surface encumbrances.* All surface encumbrances that are located so as to create a hazard to employees shall be removed or supported, as necessary, to safeguard employees.
- (b) *Underground installations.* (1) The estimated location of utility installations, such as sewer, telephone, fuel, electric, water lines, or any other underground installations that reasonably may be expected to be encountered during excavation work, shall be determined prior to opening an excavation.
- (2) Utility companies or owners shall be contacted within established or customary local response times, advised of the proposed work, and asked to establish the location of the utility underground installations prior to the start of actual excavation. When utility companies or owners cannot respond to a request to locate underground utility installations within 24 hours (unless a longer period is required by state or local law), or cannot establish the exact location of these installations, the employer may proceed, provided the employer does so with caution, and provided detection equipment or other acceptable means to locate utility installations are used.
- (3) When excavation operations approach the estimated location of underground installations, the exact location of the installations shall be determined by safe and acceptable means.
- (4) While the excavation is open, underground installations shall be protected, supported or removed as necessary to safeguard employees.
- (c) *Access and egress—*(1) *Structural ramps.* (i) Structural ramps that are used solely by employees as a means of access or egress from excavations shall be designed by a competent person. Structural ramps used for access or egress of equipment shall be designed by a competent person qualified in structural design, and shall be constructed in accordance with the design.
- (ii) Ramps and runways constructed of two or more structural members shall have the structural members connected together to prevent displacement.
- (iii) Structural members used for ramps and runways shall be of uniform thickness.
- (iv) Cleats or other appropriate means used to connect runway structural members shall be attached to the bottom of the runway or shall be attached in a manner to prevent tripping.

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