
Trenching and excavation work are among the most hazardous construction activities, with cave-ins posing the greatest risk to workers. Even a small collapse can be fatal within seconds. Understanding proper safety practices is essential to preventing injuries and saving lives on the job.

At what depth is a protective system required in a trench, unless the excavation is made entirely in stable rock?

- A. 3 feet
- B. 4 feet
- C. 5 feet
- D. 6 feet

Answer at the end of the email.

KEY ELEMENTS OF TRENCHING AND EXCAVATION



- **Primary danger is a cave-in:** Soil can suddenly collapse, burying workers under thousands of pounds of material.
 - **OSHA-requires protection at 5 feet deep or greater:** Apply sloping, shoring, or shielding unless the excavation is entirely in stable rock.
 - **Daily inspections are required by a competent person:** Check for water buildup, soil instability, and weather-related changes.
 - **Never enter an unprotected trench:** Ensure a safe means of egress, such as ladders or ramps, within 25 feet of travel.
 - **Locate utilities and control other hazards:** Mark underground lines before digging and manage hazardous atmospheres and falling loads.
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For more on Trenching and Excavation, review our Rockwood Toolbox Talks:

- [Excavation Work](#)
- [Excavations and Pits](#)
- [Operating Equipment: Stockpiles](#)
- [Trenching Safety](#)

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH



Trenching and Excavation Tips

Follow these tips to help avoid incident or injury:

- **Always use protective systems** like trench boxes or proper sloping to prevent cave-ins.
- **Keep heavy equipment and materials away from trench edges.**
- **Inspect trenches daily and after any weather event.**
- **Ensure safe entry and exit** points are accessible.
- **Never work alone** in a trench.
- **Always test for hazardous atmospheres** when required.

TIPS AND RESOURCES



OSHA, MSHA and other resources:

- [Trenching and Excavation](#) | OSHA
- [Trenching and Excavation Safety_|Trenching](#) | CDC
- [Excavation Toolkit](#) | National Safety Council



Promote safety with these videos: Search the SKUs below to find these highlights and additional videos in your [Streamery](#) library, included with your policy.

- **Trenching & Excavation Safety:** 13 minutes / SKU: 5448 + 5488-S / English & Spanish
- **Site Work Safety: Preventing Injuries Above & Below Ground:** 13 minutes / SKU: 5445 + 5445-S / English & Spanish



Free Seat Belt Covers for Your Employees

Enforce employee seatbelt use with these high visibility seatbelt covers, courtesy of Rockwood.

Email: safetysolutions@rockwoodcasualty.com to request yours. Be sure to specify orange or yellow.

QUESTIONS? REACH OUT!

We're here to help you promote safety in the workplace. [Contact Rockwood Loss Control](#) for any support you need.

Thank you for your continued partnership,

Rockwood Loss Control Team
Safetysolutions@rockwoodcasualty.com

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ANSWER



At what depth is a protective system required in a trench, unless the excavation is made entirely in stable rock?

C. 5 feet



(Missed a previous email? [Click here](#) to see an archive of previous months' safety emails on Rockwood's Loss Control website).