

Trenches: do not enter without the plan

Talk 11 of 52 | Week 11 | High-risk areas

Leader: adapt this talk to today's electrical work and site procedures. See the educational-use and liability notice on page 2.

START THE CONVERSATION

An electrical crew may need to install conduit in an excavation prepared by another contractor. Never assume that an open trench is ready for entry.

KEY TALKING POINTS

1. Do not enter until the required competent-person inspection and protective measures are in place. Conditions can change after rain, vibration, or nearby work.
2. Confirm safe access, utility identification, protective systems, and control of equipment and materials near the edge.
3. Keep clear of suspended loads and moving equipment. Report water, cracking, soil movement, or any change to the competent person and stay out until cleared.
4. If someone is trapped, call emergency services and activate the site response plan. Do not enter an unstable excavation for an improvised rescue.
5. Electrical job example: conduit installers arrive after an excavation contractor opens the route. Hold a joint briefing rather than assuming the handoff is complete because the trench is accessible. Identify the competent person, the planned installation area, and any work by other crews that could affect conditions.
6. Consider how conduit, fittings, and tools will reach the workers without exposing them to moving equipment or unstable edges. Coordinate deliveries with the excavation team. If the planned route changes or another utility is encountered, pause the installation and return the issue to the responsible people for reassessment.
7. Use a scenario in which the crew returns after a break and sees water or changed soil conditions. Ask who they notify and where they wait while the area is reassessed. No production target justifies entering first and asking later. Confirm the emergency contact and access route before anyone begins.

ASK THE CREW

1. Who is the competent person for this excavation?
2. What changes require us to stop and seek reassessment?

BEFORE WORK STARTS

Confirm the entry arrangements with the competent person before assigning anyone to the trench.

OSHA SOURCES / FURTHER READING

OSHA: [Construction trenching guidance](#)

Attendance & action record

Trenches: do not enter without the plan

Date: _____ Leader: _____

Company / jobsite: _____

Site hazards and controls discussed:

Follow-up action / responsible person / due date:

EDUCATIONAL USE & LIABILITY NOTICE

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Participant name	Signature / acknowledgment

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