

# Laborer Drowns in Flooded Pipeline

## Could This Have Been You?

*On average, 5,000 to 6,000 workers are killed each year. Learn from the following reports of real workplace fatalities to avoid a similar fate.*

A 28-year-old laborer drowned after the pipe he was working in flooded. The victim was grouting joints inside a 27-inch pipeline under construction. A backhoe operator was working a short distance away when he ruptured a water line, releasing 5,000 gallons (19,000 liters) of water into the pipeline. The victim became trapped and drowned.

**The investigator concluded that in order to prevent similar occurrences in future, employers should:**

- Develop a comprehensive safety program that clearly documents procedures for safe entry into confined spaces.
- Provide lifelines and harnesses, and ensure that workers wear them before entering confined spaces where physical hazards such as drowning are present.
- Position a trained standby person outside of confined spaces when a worker enters or works inside. The standby person should visually monitor the tasks being performed inside and should be able to communicate with the workers in the confined space.
- Not have a backhoe operating near workers in a sub-surface confined space.