Picture This: Trench and Excavation Hazards



Trenches and excavations poses various safety hazards to the workers who must work in and around them. What hazards and safety violations do you see in this photo?

1. Part of the trench is unsupported; leaving workers exposed to cave-in hazards.
2. Shoring is not consistently braced by screw jacks. This could allow the sides of the trench walls to collapse.
3. The spoil pile of rocks and other materials is not far enough back from the edge of the excavation.
    - Workers could easily be hit or crushed by objects and equipment that are not a safe distance away from the edge of the excavation.
    - In the U.S, material must be at least 2 feet from the edge of an excavation.
    - In Canada, the distance is at least 1 meter.
4. There doesn’t appear to be a ladder or other means of safe entry and exit. Excavations must have a way for workers to safely enter and exit. Check with your supervisor or competent person on specifics.

Collapses of excavations are all too common and often fatal. Protect yourself and others by being aware of the hazards and the safety measures that should be in place, before you step into an excavation.