Taking Shortcuts Fatality File

Taking shortcuts can result in catastrophic work accidents

Construction workers in Arizona and elsewhere know the hazards posed by trenches. However, many of them still enter unprotected trenches, even when their employers fail to provide adequate support to prevent cave-ins. A construction worker who was one of the few survivors of a trench collapse in 2002 now explains his experience in an effort to create awareness of the dangers of taking shortcuts that could cause fatal work accidents.

He says he was 27 years old, newly married and planning to leave on his honeymoon with his new bride that afternoon. First, he had to lay a waterline at a depth of six feet in a trench. There was no time to wait for the protective trench box that was due to be delivered. He was crouching down when the trench walls collapsed, and he was crushed by the soil that engulfed him.

He explains the immediate panic, followed by fear as he realized there was no air to breathe, and facing certain death. His co-workers were quick to react, and the top layer of soil was removed by using a backhoe. The fear of causing further injury to their colleague made them remove the rest of the soil by hand. When they uncovered him after approximately 10 minutes, he was blue and seemed lifeless. They performed life-saving CPR while awaiting the arrival of the ambulance.

He was later airlifted to a hospital, and against all expectations, he survived and suffered no brain damage as feared by doctors. He now knows that had he not decided to take a shortcut, he would have left on his honeymoon that afternoon, rather than almost losing his life. Construction workers in Arizona may want to note that they have the right to refuse to work in unprotected trenches. However, workers who are fortunate enough to survive such work accidents will be entitled to workers’

compensation benefits to cover medical expenses and lost wages.

Source: https://www.jeromegibsonlaw.com