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Kurt A. Petermeyer
Regional Administrator

One Split Second

- Robert Vazzi, Compliance Assistance Specialist -
Atlanta-East OSHA Area Office

As most of us know, we sometimes have to think fast and make a split second decision. However, the one place where an employee should never have to make a split second decision is in a trench. Most fatalities that occur in trenching happen quickly with no time for reaction by the employee. That is why it is imperative that before anyone goes into a trench, it is properly protected. Many times after a trenching accident, we have heard that "He was just going down there to make one last connection or to retrieve a tool." or "He was only going to be there for a second." Sometimes a second is enough and results in catastrophic cave-ins.

During a recent six year period, there were 271 trenching or excavation cave-in fatalities according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). In addition BLS reported that the number of excavation and trench fatalities in 2016 was near twice the average of the previous five years combined. Here in Region IV, there have been 24 trenching fatalities since 2016 with almost half of them occurring within the past 2 years. One thing that all of these fatalities had in common is that they were preventable. Standards promulgated by OSHA require safe work practices, proper safety equipment and other protective measures like inspections to keep employees safe. For example, daily inspection of the excavations and areas around excavation sites as well as the protective systems are required and must be performed by someone competent in such evaluations. The competent person is required to look for evidence of possible cave-ins, indications of failure of protective systems, hazardous atmospheres, or other hazardous conditions that could lead to a potentially fatal construction accident.

OSHA defines an "excavation" as any man-made cut, cavity, trench, or depression in the earth's surface formed by earth removal. A "trench" is defined as a narrow underground excavation that is deeper than it is wide and no wider than 15 feet. Working in either trenches or excavations carries risks, but because the space provided is more confined and trench walls are generally steeper, the hazards are higher in trenches. Cave-ins or collapses are the single greatest hazard in a trench. While 1 cubic yard of soil falling may not sound like a lot, but it can weigh as much as 3,000 pounds. Other risks include falls, falling loads, hazardous atmospheres, and encounters with mobile equipment.

Continued on Next Page

Safe Holidays

One Split Second (Continued)

OSHA regulations ensure that trenches and excavations are safe working environments (29 CFR 1926.651 and 1926.652). Those rules should be read in their entirety and adhered to without exception. Here are the major requirements.

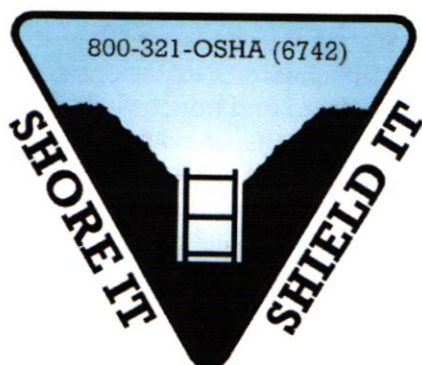
- Trenches 5 feet deep or greater require a protective system unless the excavation is made entirely in stable rock. If less than 5 feet deep, a *competent person* may determine that a protective system is not required.
- A *competent person* is “an individual who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards or working conditions that are hazardous, unsanitary, or dangerous to workers, soil types and protective systems required, and who is authorized to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate these hazards and conditions.”
- Trenches 20 feet deep or greater require that the protective system be designed by a registered professional engineer (PE) or be based on tabulated data prepared and/or approved by a registered PE.
- Safe access and egress is required for all excavations and can be provided by ladders, steps, ramps, or other safe means of exit for employees working in trench excavations 4 ft. or deeper. These devices must be located within 25 feet of all workers.

The most widely used protective measures are sloping, benching (sloping with steps), shoring, and shielding. Shielding involves the use of structures called trench boxes or trench shields. The type of protection selected is generally contingent on the type of soil in which the excavation is made. Again, for trenches deeper than 20 feet, the protective system must be designed and approved by a registered PE.

On October 1, 2018, OSHA issued a revised compliance directive to address Trenching and Excavation Hazards. The directive calls for increased outreach and training for employers and increased enforcement: https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/enforcement/directives/CPL-02-00-161_0.pdf.

In Fiscal Year 2019, Region IV has conducted 172 trenching inspections. In approximately 50% of them, violations related to the trenching standard were found.

For information on trenching and how to reduce trenching hazards see OSHA's Trenching and Excavation page on their website.



Empowering Health Connections at Work

Marilyn M. Vélez, Compliance Assistance Specialist
- Atlanta-West OSHA Area Office -

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Atlanta West Area Office and the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Georgia's Safety & Health Committee joined forces to develop a campaign focused on improving awareness and education of mental health issues in the construction industry.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *Total Worker Health* initiative, addressing worker well-being in a holistic way which "integrates health protection efforts with a broad spectrum of interventions to improve worker health and well-being" beyond the well-known "fatal four" – falls, struck by, electrocution, and caught-in/between – is what some safety professionals are now considering as "a new frontier in workplace safety".

Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas, an international mental health and suicide prevention speaker and author, reports from a 2018 published CDC study (Peterson, et al, 2018) that 20% of all men who died by suicide in the U.S. were in the construction/extraction industry. Suicides caused more than 47,000 deaths in 2017, resulting in about one death every 11 minutes. According to Dr. Spencer-Thomas "if 20% of them were in construction/extraction that means we can estimate that over 5,000 men working in construction/extraction died by suicide – over 9x more than all of the fatal four deaths together".

These are eye opening statistics impossible to ignore by safety professionals of the AGC of Georgia's Safety & Health Committee and OSHA. A brainstorming meeting was held and a mental health professional was invited to develop a new safety awareness and education campaign to address mental health issues in the workplace.

The campaign's slogan "*Empowering Healthy Connections at Work*" was inspired while listening to the mental health professional highlight several times how important developing human connections, trust, and empowerment among the workers is key for effectively and compassionately addressing this preventable injury.

This new campaign plans to accomplish the following three major outreach strategies:

January/February, 2020: The AGC of Georgia in conjunction with Behavioral Health Link will provide free of charge 4-hours training titled "Safe TALK" (Suicide Alertness for Everyone).

March/April, 2020: The AGC of Georgia in conjunction with Behavioral Health Link will host seven "*Members First Meetings*" in Macon, Columbus, Valdosta, Albany, Commerce, Savannah and Augusta to address mental health issues in the workplace.

May 4-8, 2020: During the 2020 Safety Week, a safety stand-down, a day of awareness and education about suicide prevention in the workplace will be nationally recognized.

If you wish to join forces with this group or want more information, please contact Marilyn M. Vélez at vez.marilyn@dol.gov or Cherri Watson at watson@agcga.org.

Requirements of a Qualified Lineman in Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution

-Jeffery Stawowy, Area Director, Atlanta-West OSHA Area Office -
- Keith Hass, Assistant Area Director, Atlanta-West OSHA Area Office -

Electric Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution (29 CFR 1910.269) covers the operation and maintenance of electric power generation, control, transformation, transmission, and distribution lines and related equipment. These provisions apply to power generation, transmission, and distribution installations, including related equipment for the purpose of communication or metering, that are accessible only to qualified employees. Qualified employees are those employees who work on, or are directly associated with, the installations that include electrical testing involving temporary measurements associated with electric power generation, transmission, and distribution in laboratories, in the field, in substations, and on lines, as opposed to metering, relaying, line-clearance tree trimming and routine line work.



The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Atlanta Regional Office, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Southeastern Line Constructors Apprenticeship and Training (SELCAT), and the Southeastern Line Constructors Chapter (SLCC)/ National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) recognized the value of a collaborative relationship to foster safer and more healthful American workplaces. To that end, OSHA, IBEW, SELCAT and the SLCC/NECA entered into an Alliance originally signed in September 26, 2003.

In an effort to develop effective training and education program for workers in the electric utility industry, SELCAT developed an apprenticeship program teaching outside electrical line apprentices and Journeymen in the Southeastern Region. SELCAT apprentices also work alongside veteran journeyman and learn from the best instructors in the industry. Apprentices are members of high-energy teams that actually work in the field to maintain power lines, substations and other electrical apparatus.

To apply for the apprenticeship program, applicants must be at least 18 years old, have a high school diploma or GED, and obtain a Class A commercial driver's license and successfully complete a Department of Transportation physical.

Each apprentice is required to complete three years of related instruction away from the job for a minimum of 144 hours per year. The time spent in related instruction shall be in addition to the required 7,000 hours of "on-the-job" training, and related classroom instruction within 3-1/2 years and for Underground Technician 4,000 hours of on-the-job training within 2 years.

SELCAT in Georgia services Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee with its 24,000-square-foot training facility, located at 90 Newnan South Industrial Drive, in Newnan GA.

References: General Industry [29 CFR 1910](#) Subpart R, Special Industries - Electric Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution. Agreement between OSHA Region IV U.S. Department of Labor and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Fifth and tenth districts and Southeastern Line Constructors Apprenticeship and training. <https://selcat.com/>.



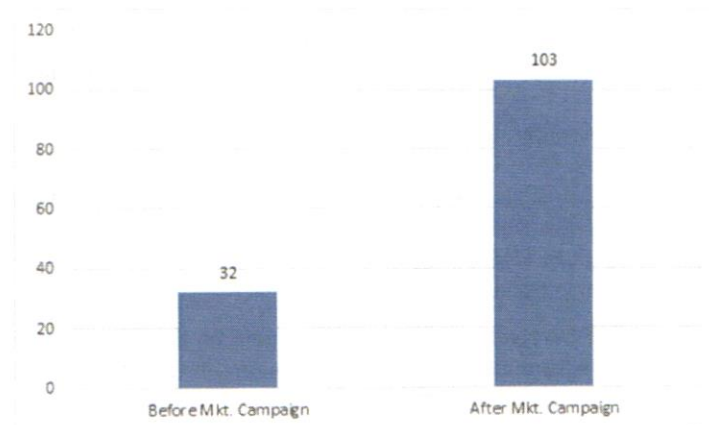
Consultation Corner

- Thalia Barber, University of South Florida SafetyFlorida OSHA Consultative Services -

How USF SafetyFlorida Consultation Program Used Focused Marketing As a Key Enabler

It's no secret the way people consume information has changed over the years. Putting together a marketing mix that effectively reaches the masses is challenging but key to the success of any organization. Early in FY 2019, we noticed a substantial decrease in consultation requests. We simply were not reaching employers in northern Florida. The solution was to develop an impactful marketing campaign that focuses on reaching small employers in high hazard industries. We were able to successfully accomplish this via use of the following methods:

Chapter Meetings: Attended and participated in four events/chapter meetings with the local Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce. Two such events consisted of the Transportation and Logistics luncheons. The meetings brought together state officials and small business owners operating in high hazard industries in the city of Jacksonville, Florida. Both meetings were approximately attended by 100 people. Our program was able to increase awareness of our product offerings and the benefits of working directly with the on-site consultation program. Additionally, we were able to get leads as a result of our efforts.



Consultation requests in Northern region (November 1, 2018 - January 31, 2019) before marketing efforts and (February 1, 2019 - October 10, 2019) post marketing efforts.

Print Advertisement: Advertised in the Florida Trend and FRSA Trade publications. Our advertisement was distributed to more than 34,500 small business owners, managers and entrepreneurs currently seeking services, tools and resources for their business.

Targeted letter: The consultation program focused on reaching organizations that needed our help the most. This targeted mail campaign was distributed to at risk worksites and recipients of OSHA citations and court orders.

E-Newsletter: We continue to publish a monthly e-newsletter where we cover new developments in occupational health and safety to reach our clients and prospective customers, capture leads and build relationships. We were successful in acquiring 7,000 new subscribers.

To achieve similar results, you need all the fundamentals of a marketing strategy, e.g., print, mail-out, attendance at focus group meetings and good old fashion relationships with key stakeholders. You need to position your brand in relevant channels and communicate value to your customers.



OTIEC Alliance Corner

- Professional Development -



- Wendy Laing, Southeastern OSHA Training Institute Education Center (OTIEC) -

**NC STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Educational Opportunities in Safety and Health

Continuous learning is necessary if you are working in the safety and health profession. Every day we are exposed to new technologies, new or revised standards, and improved methods of minimizing hazards. Below are several resources to stay abreast of safety and health training opportunities:

Federal OSHA Online Newsletter [QuickTakes](#)

NC State University and Southeastern OTI Education Center online [SafetyGuardian](#) Newsletter

[NC Department of Labor](#) Training and Presentations

Federal OSHA Training [Videos](#)

NC State University [Southeastern OTI Education Center](#)

Please contact us at southeasternoti@ncsu.edu if we can direct you to these or other training resources.

- Mylene Kellerman, University of South Florida OSHA Training Institute Education Center (OTIEC) -



USF OTIEC has had a very active year, chock-full of complimentary courses in support of OSHA initiatives, conferences, and new partnerships. The Center participated in the National ASSP Conference in New Orleans, LA, the NSC Congress & Expo in San Diego, CA and the Region IV VPPA Safety & Health Excellence Conference in Chattanooga, TN. The Center also hosted a complimentary OSHA 7500-Introduction to Safety and Health Management course for the South Florida Federal Field Safety Council in Miami, in an effort to promote and encourage greater participation in Federal Field Safety Council meetings.

USF OTIEC also partnered closely with the USF SafetyFlorida Consultation program to offer a complimentary Silica in Construction Symposium and a Heat Stress Awareness Seminar. Below are listed some of the other complimentary events that were hosted in major cities throughout Florida to increase awareness and support OSHA initiatives. Over 350 attendees benefitted from these events.

- Workers' Memorial Day event, April - May 2019- OSHA 7500- Introduction to Safety and Health Management.
- National Fall Prevention Stand-Down, May 2019 - OSHA 7405- Fall Hazard Awareness Course
- National Safety Stand-Down Trenching and Excavation, June 2019 - OSHA 7410- Managing Excavation Hazards
- Safe & Sound Campaign, August 2019 - OSHA 7500- Introduction to Safety Health Management
- 74th Annual Workers' Compensation Educational Conference - 31st Annual Safety and Health Conference - 10-Hour General Industry Outreach Training Course, August 2019

In FY 2020, USF OTIEC plans to continue to offer complimentary courses to support OSHA's national emphasis programs and initiatives, and expand training and educational opportunities for students as the OSHA family endeavors to promote occupational safety and health in the workplace, to reduce injury and illnesses, and ultimately to save lives.



Left: USF OTIEC's R. Layman, Prevent Falls in Construction Stand-down

Right: USF OTIEC's A. Bayandrian, Workers' Memorial Day



Fatal Facts

INCIDENT SUMMARY

Incident type:Post Hurricane Damage Roof Repair
 Weather conditions/Time of day:Outdoors/2:30 PM
 Type of operation:Replace fascia boards
 Size of work crew:1
 Worksite inspection conducted:No
 Competent safety monitoring on-site:No
 Safety and Health program in effect:Not for this job task
 Training and education for employees:Not on This Process
 Occupation of deceased employees:Assistant Warehouse Mgr
 Age/Sex of deceased employees:57/M
 Time with company.....5.years
 Time at task:Less Than 45 Minutes
 Language Spoken:.....English
 Union/Non-Union:Non-Union



BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:

An employer had sustained structural roof damage to their off-site warehouse facility during Hurricane Michael. Temporary repairs included placing metal panels over damaged skylights until a permanent repair could be made. On March 19, 2019, an employee was assigned to drive to the facility, climb to the roof, and to apply roof caulk adhesive to stop a roof leak. As the employee walked towards the roof leak area, on the 2:12 pitch, 1-story roof, he stepped on one of the temporary metal panels and fell 14-foot, from the opening to the interior concrete floor below. After several phone calls went unanswered, the VP of Operations drove to the warehouse and discovered the Victim unresponsive on the concrete surface. The Victim suffered fatal injuries as a result of the fall.

INCIDENT PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

Employers need to ensure that workers are protected from falling through any hole (including skylights) that is 4 feet (1.2 m) or more above a lower level. This can be accomplished by covers that are strong enough to support the weight of an employee and secured in place to prevent slipping, or a guardrail systems or a travel restraint systems or a personal fall arrest systems. See 1910.28(b)(3) for the requirements of the standard.

You Have a Voice in the Workplace

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 affords workers the right to a safe workplace (see [OSHA's Worker Rights page, https://www.osha.gov/workers/index.html](https://www.osha.gov/workers/index.html)).

Workers also have the right to file a complaint with OSHA if they believe that there are either violations of OSHA standards or serious workplace hazards.

How OSHA Can Help

For questions, to get information or advice, to report an emergency, report a fatality or catastrophe, or to file a confidential complaint, contact your nearest OSHA office or State Plan Office, visit www.osha.gov, or call our toll free number: 1-800-321-OSHA (6742). TTY 1-877-889-5627.

More information:

OSHA standards and regulations: <https://www.osha.gov/law-regs.html>.

OSHA publications:

<https://www.osha.gov/pls/publications/publication.html>.

OSHA's free On-site Consultation services:

<https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/consult.html>.

Training resources:

<https://www.osha.gov/dte/index.html>.

Note: The described case was selected as being representative of improper work practices which likely contributed to a fatality from an INCIDENT. The INCIDENT prevention recommendations do not necessarily reflect the outcome of any legal aspects of the incident case. OSHA encourages your company or organization to duplicate and share this information.