* OSHA’s Specific Excavation Requirements (1926.651) consistently appear in the top 10 most frequently-cited standards at construction industry workplaces. In FY 2020, it appeared as #8.
* Excavation is one of the most hazardous construction occupations, and the primary hazard is employee injury from a cave-in. In 2019, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 24 excavation fatalities. This is an increase of nearly 30% over 2018.
* OSHA continues to collaborate with industry organizations such as the National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) to increase hazard awareness related to trenching and excavation operations.
* In June 2021, NUCA is sponsoring the second annual [Trench Safety Month](http://www.nuca.com/tssd). NUCA and United Rentals will be hosting webinars and offering guided toolbox talks. More information is available at [www.trenchsafetyevents.com](http://www.trenchsafetyevents.com).
* Remember the three S’s: **Slope** or bench trench walls, **Shore** trench walls with supports, or **Shield** trench walls with trench boxes. These are proven strategies for protecting workers’ lives from a fatal trench collapse, and they must be used wherever and whenever cave-in hazards exist.
* VOSH’s webpage provides information and resources for trench safety. There you can find several outreach materials that may be downloaded, including fact sheets, pamphlets, and references to Federal OSHA’s [Trenching and Excavation Webpage](https://www.osha.gov/trenching-excavation).
* OSHA’s “[5 Things You Should Know to Stay Safe in a Trench](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zV-sVn_AUEM)” video provides the following tips:
* Ensure that there's a safe way to enter and exit the trench.
* Ensure trenches have cave-in protection.
* Keep materials away from the edge of the trench.
* Look for standing water and test if atmospheric hazards are or may be present.
* Never enter a trench unless it has been properly inspected by a competent person.
* Employers can request assistance through the Virginia [On-Site Consultation Program](https://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh-programs/consultation/), which offers no-cost and confidential occupational safety and health services to small- and medium-sized businesses.