



# Working at height - Excavations

**Audience:** Site Operatives

**Presenter:** GHSEA, Site Manager, Trade Supervisors



## Excavations

Deaths and injuries occur every year due to collapsing excavations, workers or members of the public falling into excavations or vehicles overturning in excavations.

The majority of our construction activities will involve excavations, you are likely to be working in close proximity to service trenches, drainage trenches or plot excavations.

All excavations must be protected in some way or another, usually dependant on the depth and ground conditions.



## Main Risks:

- Collapse of the sides;
- People and vehicles falling into the excavation;
- Materials falling onto people working in the excavation;
- Undermining nearby structures;
- Underground and overhead services;
- The ingress of ground and surface water;
- Contaminated land, and
- Reduction of oxygen levels due to toxic fumes or vapours.



## Planning

All excavations must be planned and carried out in accordance with your Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS).

A Permit to Work must be opened and issued by the site manager or ground works supervisor prior to any work taking place and must be followed by all operatives involved in the excavations.

Prior to breaking the surface the associated site plans and utility drawings of the site must be consulted to identify if there are any existing services in the area. A Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) and Genny scan must also be carried out by a trained, competent person. All service runs must be identified and marked on the ground before digging commences. If service runs cannot be identified, trial holes must be dug by hand to identify and mark the extent of the service run. The hand tools must



## Training

Only workers who have the required training are permitted to work in excavations. Additional training may be required to inspect excavations or work in areas with an increased risk, such as excavations identified as confined spaces etc.