

STOPThink! HiPO Near Miss

Unsafe Working in an Excavation



Operatives working in an unsupported excavation



Example of trench support system

What happened?

Recently two supply chain operatives working for Octavius were observed working in an excavation approximately 2m deep, as they were installing a drainage pipe. They were stopped from working and asked to leave the excavation by the client's general foreman. Twenty minutes later, it was noticed that the operatives re-entered the excavation and placed a stop-end on the drainage pipe.

What we know

- A potentially more serious outcome could have occurred if the trench sidewalls collapsed and crushed the two operatives.
- There was no SSOW in place and operatives had not received a suitable task briefing. A POWRA was not completed.
- The operatives re-entered the trench to install a stop end on the drainage pipe.
- There was inadequate supervision of the works.

Actions taken

- Safety Stand down initiated and completed by Octavius and supply chain partners.
- Immediate joint investigation commenced by Octavius and EKFB.
- 72 hour client review process initiated. Panel convened 3/09/2024 to review all aspects of the incident and to detail what will be done to prevent re occurrence.
- Disciplinary action taken against the individuals involved based on the findings of the investigation.
- Refresher training for temporary works to be implemented for project staff and supply chain.
- A review of supervisory levels has been undertaken for future similar operations.

What you must do

- Do not enter into unsupported deep excavations with no exceptions.
- Ensure that task information is communicated to all those involved in the task.
- Ensure that a suitable trench/excavation support system is selected and detailed within a SSoW.
- Ensure that a suitable POWRA is completed detailing the controls associated with deep excavations.
- Ensure that there are suitable and sufficient supervisory resources for the task.
- Ensure that the STOPThink! Fundamentals are in place prior to undertaking any works.
- If you're in any doubt whatsoever about what action to take, stop and think and consult your Line Manager or Safety Advisor.

