

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

TB 0170

Excavation Work

Background

There have been a number of observations made where excavation works have been carried out in such a manner that may endanger the safety of workers. Excavation failures are particularly dangerous because they may occur quickly, limiting the ability of workers to escape injury or death by suffocation or internal crush injuries.

Actions

This Technical Bulletin is issued to draw attention to the precautions and procedures detailed in the WorkCover Excavation work code of practice - July 2014, (attached). Amendments will also be included in MCI 0006 – The Endeavour Energy *Underground distribution construction standards manual*.

Before entering an excavation, a WH&RA must be completed to identify and manage risks to the health & safety of workers. Consideration must be given to the site location, ground conditions, depth of excavation and the placement of excavated materials.

A person who proposes to excavate at least 1.5m deep, must minimise the risk to any person by ensuring that all sides of the trench (or any excavation) are supported by shoring, benching and/or battering.

Attention is also drawn to the following diagrams which are explained in more detail within the code of practice.

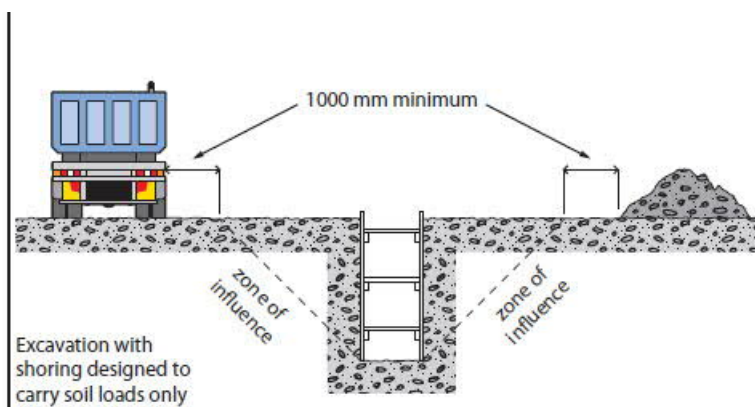


Figure1: The depth of the excavation also determines the proximity of vehicles or stock piles of excavated materials

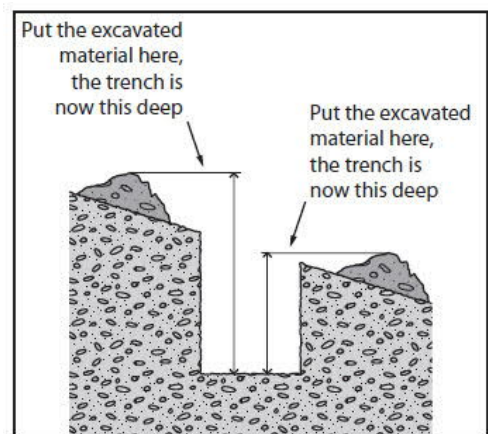


Figure 2: The impact of excavated material on the effective excavation depth

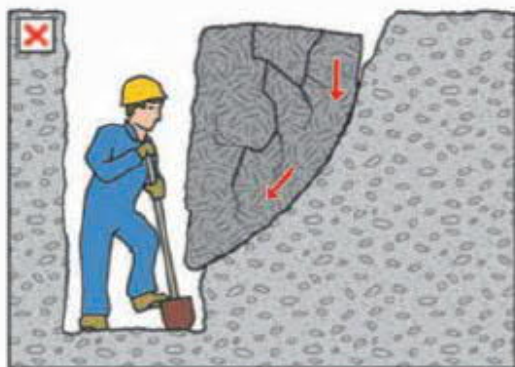


Figure 3: The excavation wall starts to collapse after seepage along the slipping plane

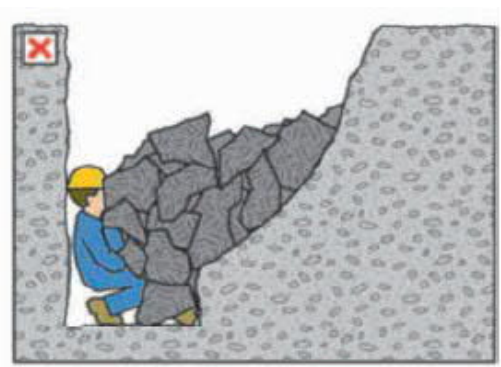


Figure 4: The worker is crushed against the opposite excavation wall by the collapsing ground. It should be noted that the weight of a wedge of sand 1m x 2m is approx. 3 Tonnes.

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