



Safety Bulletin EM 385-1-1

Mobile District Safety and Occupational Health Office
Excavation Inspection and Testing

Bulletin 47-09

The 15 September 2008 Safety Manual (yellow book) is now in effect for most new contracts and government operations. Please note the changes for excavation as stated below.

25.A.02 Excavation inspection and testing.

- a. When persons will be in or around an excavation, a Competent Person shall inspect the excavation, the adjacent areas, and protective systems daily: before each work shift; throughout the work shifts as dictated by the work being done; after every rainstorm; after other events that could increase hazards, e.g., snowstorm, windstorm, thaw, earthquake, etc.; when fissures, tension cracks, sloughing, undercutting, water seepage, bulging at the bottom or other similar conditions occur; when there is a change in size, location or placement of the spoil pile; and where there is any indication or change in adjacent structures.
- b. The Competent Person shall be able to demonstrate the following:
 - (1) Training, experience, and knowledge of:
 - (a) Soil analysis;
 - (b) Use of protective systems; and
 - (c) Requirements of this section, EM 385-1-1 and 29 CFR 1926 Subpart P.
 - (2) Ability to detect:
 - (a) Conditions that could result in cave-ins;
 - (b) Failures in protective systems;
 - (c) Hazardous atmospheres; and
 - (d) Other hazards including those associated with confined spaces.
 - (3) And have the Authority to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate existing and predictable hazards and stop work when required.
- c. Testing for soil classification shall be of an approved method; pocket penetrometer, plasticity/ wet thread test or visual test and shall be conducted at least daily or if conditions warrant as described in paragraph 25.A.02.a. above.
- d. If evidence of a situation that could result in possible cave ins, slides, failure of protective systems, hazardous atmospheres, or other hazardous condition is identified, exposed workers shall be removed from the hazard and all work in the excavation stopped until all necessary safety precautions have been implemented.
- e. In locations where oxygen deficiency or gaseous conditions are known or suspected, or in excavations 4 ft (1.2 m) or greater in depth, air in the excavation shall be tested prior to the start of each shift or more often if directed by the GDA. A log of all test results shall be maintained at the work site. > **See Sections 5 and 6.**

