CSI Country Wide Case Study Safety Strategy Discussion

Construction Safety Investigator

Instructions

The objective of this tool is to provide field supervisors with information to proactively engage workers and discuss safety related concerns that they may encounter. Safety discussions should not be limited to the subject above and should pertain to the activities that workers will be involved in that may have the potential for safety related exposures.

Case Day:

October 2008

Accident Type:

Excavation and Trenching

Relevant laws, rules and codes may include:

29CFR 1926.20(a)(1), (b)(1)&(2), 1926.21(b)(2), 1926.651, 1926.651(h), 1926.651(k), 1926.652

Case:

A 30 year-old worker was working in a trench when it collapsed, pinning him for hours.

Accident Detail:

The trench in question was located in the front of a building, which was part of an assisted living development. The worker's employer was hired to fix a leak in the building's sprinkler system.

The worker was repairing a water main related to the sprinkler in a 6 foot-deep trench when leaking water caused the soil and mud around him to collapse. The worker sank up to his waist and spent nearly five hours pinned. Initial attempts by coworkers to rescue him were unsuccessful.

When rescue crews responded, they were able to free the man.

Reconstructive Safety Evaluation:

- What are some of the possible causes of the accident being discussed?
- What actions could have been taken that might have prevented this accident from occurring?

Accident Scene Conclusion:

The investigation revealed that trench was not inspected by a Competent Person1 prior to the worker entering, the trench was not protected from cave-in by adequate protective systems, coworkers entered the unstable trench to try to rescue the worker and there was no adequate means of access or egress.

Preventive Safety Measures Include:

- All operations are be preplanned using a Job Safety Task Analysis to ensure potential safety hazards associated with an operation are identified and appropriate steps are taken to eliminate or control them.
- Workers should be trained in the hazards of the work they are to perform, the personal protective equipment and protection systems needed to safely work in an excavation/trench as well as safe work procedures necessary to perform their assigned tasks.
- Excavations/trenches must be evaluated by a Competent Person before each shift, when water accumulation is present and / or as needed when conditions change that may affect the safety of the workers and structural stability of the excavation/trench.
- All excavations 5 feet deep or greater must be protected from cave-in by adequate protective systems such as sloping, benching, support or shield systems
- A safe means of access and egress is required in trenches 4 feet or more in depth.

Attendance Roster		

Reference: This case is fictitious, and any resemblance to any persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. However, the type of accident described in this case summary happens all too often on construction sites.

¹As defined by OSHA requirements

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