



# Trench Safety

*When a trench caves in, the weight of the dirt can trap and kill workers. One cubic yard of dirt can weigh 3,000 pounds or more. Cave-ins cause about 1,000 injuries each year, of which 140 result in permanent disability, and 75 result in death.*

## Three Laborers' Story

Three laborers were working in an 8-foot-high wall trench. The walls had not been shored up. One side caved in, burying one worker and partially burying another. The third man managed to escape unharmed. The partially buried man was pulled out, but the buried worker suffocated and died.

- **Why did this accident happen?**
- **How could it have been prevented?**
- **Have you or someone you know been in a trench cave-in? If so, what happened?**

## Remember this:

- NEVER enter an unprotected or uninspected trench, even for a short task. A trained, certified person must inspect the trench and surroundings first.
- NEVER work alone in a trench. Make sure you understand your employer's trench emergency program.
- Make sure rocks and dirt are kept at least 2 feet away from the top of the trench.
- Make sure trench protection is provided. OSHA allows benching or sloping ground, shoring, or shielding with supports or trench boxes.

## How can we stay safe today?

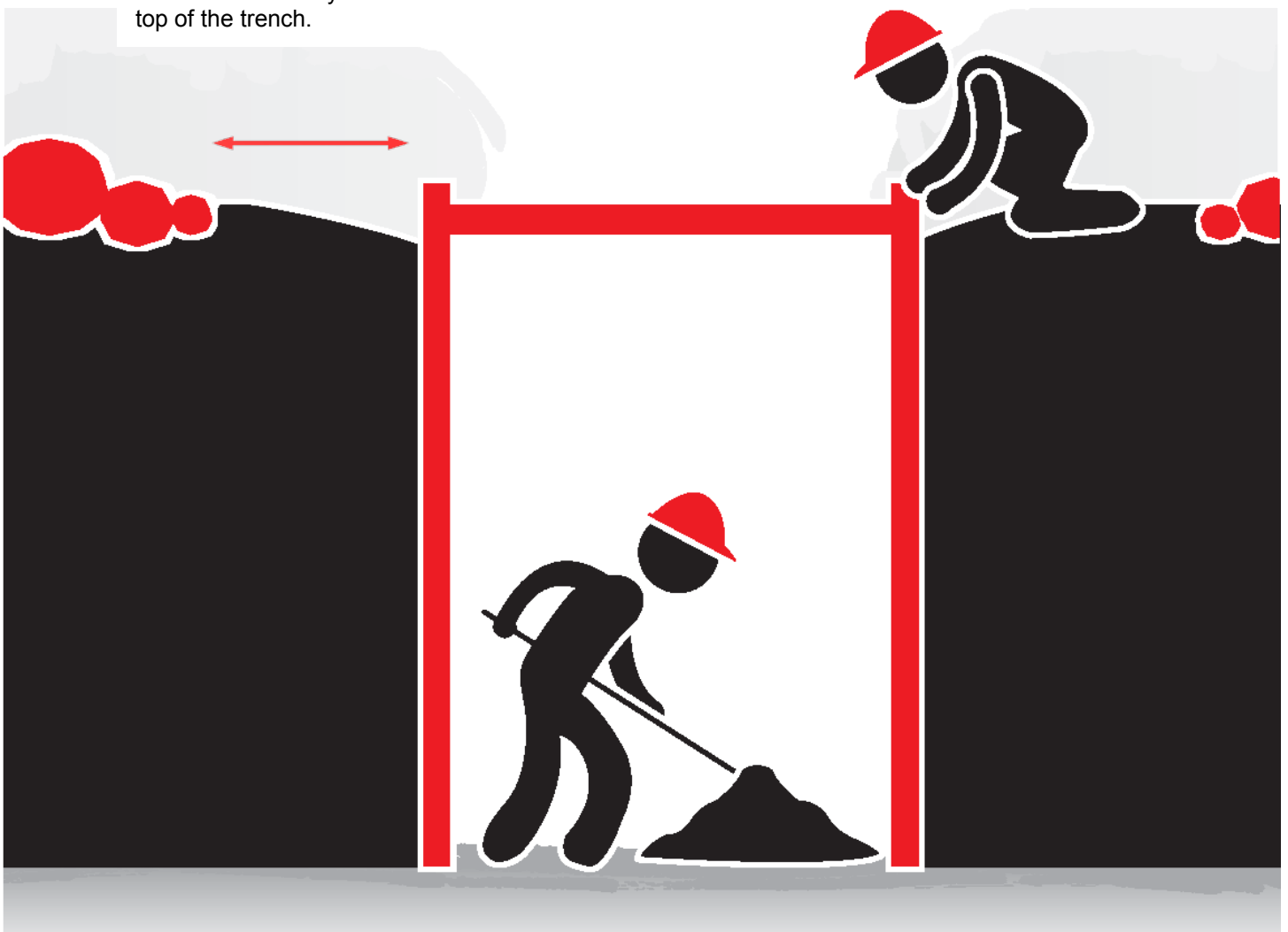
What will we do at the worksite today to promote trench safety?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

OSHA REGULATION: 1926.651(k)(1)

# Trench Safety

Rocks and dirt should be...  
at least 2 feet away from the  
top of the trench.



- Make sure trench protection is provided. OSHA allows sloping and benching, shoring, and shields like trench boxes.
- Never work alone in a trench and without a lookout standing by.
- Make sure rocks and dirt are at least 2 feet away from the top of the trench.