

Case 93. 24-year-old male construction worker was buried when an excavation in which he was working collapsed onto him.

On Friday, September 23, 2005, at approximately 3:00 p.m., a 24-year-old male construction worker was buried when an excavation in which he was working collapsed onto him. The excavation was approximately 50 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 6 feet deep. He and his fellow workers were installing 8-inch black ductile pipe for a water main. They were attempting to maneuver a section of water pipe under two PVC pipes at the bottom of the excavation when the cave-in occurred. There was no trench box, no shoring and no proper angle of repose for the excavation. Due to a recent rainfall the soil was wet. The eastern and western sides of the excavation were close to vertical. The east side failed and caved in.

Emergency medical help was delayed, because no one called 911 until several minutes after the incident occurred. Also, the new housing development was not on the mapping system for the 911 emergency call center. No one certified in CPR/First Aid was present at the site to assist. By the time help arrived, he had been extricated from the cave-in. He was transported to a hospital where he was pronounced dead. The cause of death was multiple blunt force injuries.

MIOSHA issued the following 5 Serious and 3 Willful citations:

Serious:

GENERAL RULES, PART 1, RULE 114(2)(a)
Employer-designated qualified persons' actions were not consistent with a qualified person responsible for administering an accident prevention program.

Serious:

GENERAL RULES, PART 1, RULE 114(2)(d).
Employer failed to provide adequate instruction for employees in the recognition, avoidance and elimination of hazards associated with excavating and pipe laying operations.

Serious:

GENERAL RULES, PART 1, RULE 114(2)(h).
Employer failed to instruct employees in the procedures to take in the event of an accident.

Serious:

GENERAL RULES, PART 1, RULE 132(2).
Employer failed to make provisions for prompt medical response prior to beginning construction at the site.

Serious:

GENERAL RULES, PART 1, RULE 132(3).
Employer failed to have a person certified in CPR/First Aid at the site.

Willful:

GENERAL RULES, PART 1, RULE 114(1).
Employee accident prevention program was not maintained and coordinated with the employees working at the site.

Willful:

EXCAVATION, TRENCHING, AND SHORING, PART 9, RULE 932(5).
Qualified person's actions not consistent with qualified person training related to excavating and equipment operations.

Willful:

EXCAVATION, TRENCHING, AND SHORING, PART 9, RULE 941(1).
No trench box, no shoring, no proper angle of repose for excavation at site.