

- Keep heavy equipment, excavated dirt, and other materials and equipment away from the edge of an excavation.
  - U.S. requires at least 2 feet back from the edge.
  - Many jurisdictions in Canada require the distance to be 3 meters.
- Employees must have a safe way to enter and exit a trench, such as a ladder or ramp.
- Locate underground utilities before digging.
- Test for atmospheric hazards such as low oxygen, hazardous fumes and toxic gases.
  - Typically required when the excavation is greater than 4 feet deep.

## TOOL

Use the Fatality Report on page 2 to capture workers and drive home the message that trenching and excavation work can be deadly.

Give your workers the Trenching and Excavation Safety handout on page 5, before they start work in a trench.

Find more related tools at [SafeSupervisor.com](http://SafeSupervisor.com)

- Never let employees work under suspended or raised loads and materials.
- Ensure employees wear high visibility or other suitable clothing when exposed to vehicular traffic.

## SHOP TALK

# 10 Reasons Training Messages Don't Reach Their Target

### 1. They Really Can't Hear You

Do you mumble or talk too fast? Are you dealing with an employee with hearing loss? Is the environment distracting? These factors can affect what trainees hear.

### 2. You're Speaking Greek

Don't assume knowledge level and understanding. Define any words which may be unfamiliar. Keep the message focused and simple.

### 3. They Hear the Message but Don't Understand the Reason

Many trainees want to know the "what" and the "why". Especially if you're trying to introduce a change in procedure or technique. Explaining the "why" is what will lead to a change in behavior.

### 4. The Message Seems Irrelevant

Before explaining a safety procedure, point out the hazards and how it affects them. It makes a lot more sense to wear protective gloves when you know about flesh-melting chemicals.

### 5. Your Jokes Are Garbling the Message

Humor can be an important tool in training. But, if you kid around too much, it may be hard for trainees to tell when you are serious.

### 6. You're Not Listening

Give your trainees lots of chances to ask questions. You can gauge the level of understanding by what they ask. No questions, doesn't equal understanding. Trainees may

not have questions because they don't understand what you said.

### 7. You're Not Tailoring Your Message

Differences in literacy levels and culture may make it difficult for you to communicate with your trainees. Be sensitive to these differences and look for ways to bridge them.

### 8. You're Not Testing Their Comprehension

Don't assume the message has been comprehended. Ask the group to repeat the message back to you. "Okay, now what is the procedure for disposing of oily rags?"

### 9. You're Relying Too Heavily on the Spoken Word

Different people have different learning styles. Some need to hear. Some need to see. Others need to do. Still others won't learn a thing until they get their hands on a training manual. Most need a combination of these methods.

### 10. You're Not Anticipating Obstacles

There may be roadblocks to following your instructions. Habit and uncertainty are common ones. Try to anticipate and remove these. Does the trainee have the tools, equipment, or procedures to follow through on what you said?

