

2003 Trenching and Excavation Fatality Related Analysis by the Directorate of Construction

Fifty-three trenching and excavation related fatalities were reported to OSHA in 2003. Federal OSHA inspected 34 of these 53 fatalities. The Directorate of Construction evaluated the 34 federal OSHA case files. The following is a summary of some key points in the analysis:

- 74% of the deaths were due to cave-ins
- Protective systems were not used in 75% of the fatalities
- 69% percent of the excavations were between 5' and 9' in depth
- 38% of the deaths occurred on Monday
- The average age of the decedents was approximately 36 years (range:18 to 62)
- 50% of the decedents had been with their employer for less than one year
- 62% of the decedents were not given trench safety training
- 52% of the decedents were Hispanic
- 84% of the fatalities occurred in companies with less than 50 employees
- 48% of the deaths occurred among companies with less than 10 employees