



## **DON'T GAMBLE WITH EXCAVATIONS**

**Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission/  
Health & Safety Division**

**[www.awcc.state.ar.us](http://www.awcc.state.ar.us) 1-800-622-4472**

**fax: 501-683-3169**

**[Health&Safety@awcc.state.ar.us](mailto:Health&Safety@awcc.state.ar.us)**

For years the word 'GAMBLE' was associated with construction excavations. By gambling on unknown soil conditions, ground water, adjacent structures, steep banks, etc., the job could move faster with less cost and less backfill. When banks caved in they had to be dug back out or worked around, and when workers were crushed or buried alive, it was an accepted risk. Lucky for all of you, those days are gone -- or are they?

A recent annual study shows that more than 100 Americans were killed in excavation cave-ins, 500 more died from other causes in and around excavations, and another 7,000 were left seriously injured. None of those killed or injured expected it to happen to them. They were simply victims who gambled and lost, or were not properly trained to identify the hazards.

Remember, gravity works on earth materials such as sand, clay, stone, etc. just as it does on other construction materials. When improperly stacked, it's just a matter of time until the pile falls over, slides, or collapses. When a cave-in accident occurs, the likelihood of death is fifteen times greater than from any other type of serious construction accident, however, by following proper excavation procedures, nearly all cave-in accidents are preventable.

For your protection, OSHA's Construction Standard (Subpart P) clarifies the requirements for the protection of employees, both in and around excavations, and requires, that a '**COMPETENT PERSON**' be present throughout the entire excavation process.

A '**COMPETENT PERSON**' is one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has the authorization to take prompt corrective action to eliminate them.

By complying with the excavation standards, you can perform your excavation activities safely and efficiently, without ...

**'TAKING GAMBLES'...**

**or**

**'DIGGING GRAVES'...**

