

# MOCGA Toolbox Talk

# Sewer Tap Hazards



## SAFETY TIPS

Contact 811 or 1-800-DIG-RITE or log onto [www.mo1call.com](http://www.mo1call.com) to have underground utilities located before beginning excavation!

### SEWER TAP SAFETY INFORMATION:

- Traffic on nearby roads can cause vibration.
- Hammers and tools can create vibration.
- Most sewers are between 10 and 20 feet in depth, requiring shoring or trench boxes.
- Stackable boxes may be needed.
- All sewer taps are performed in Class B or C previously disturbed or wet soil.
- Class B previously disturbed soil is very prone to collapse since it isn't compacted well.
- Class C wet soil is heavy and can easily flow or slide due to water saturation.
- Sewer taps can trap plumbers in tight, confined areas, often only the width of a bucket.
- Collapses in waist-deep trenches can trap workers at the knees or waist, causing toxic crush syndrome and ultimately, death.
- Keep equipment clear of overhead power lines.

### BELIEVE IN SAFETY: PROTECT YOURSELF!

- Don't risk it. A simple, quick job can lead to tragic ending if safety rules aren't followed.
- Taking extra time to do the job safely will protect your company and employees from the pain and expenses of a terrible accident.
- Don't make your employees work in unsafe trenches.
- Safety issues that could cause injury or death? Contact OSHA immediately at 1-800-321-OSHA

**Introduction:** Plumbers, property maintenance personnel and homeowners put themselves at risk when performing water and sewer repairs without proper protection. Folks will naturally attempt to do the work themselves to save money, all while placing themselves at great risk for trench collapse. Review this document with your plumbing crew, and make sure they're protected from trench collapse.

### PLUMBING COMPANY OWNERS AND EMPLOYEES MUST KNOW OSHA'S EXCAVATION SAFETY TRIGGER NUMBERS

- **18 inches** – in order to prevent objects from falling into the trench, the trench box or shoring must protrude 18 inches above the trench edge.
- **2 feet** – all tools, spoils, supplies and equipment must be kept at least 2 feet back from the trench edge
- **4 feet** – place a ladder or steps into the trench
- **4 feet** – perform air quality testing where soil could be contaminated (landfills, old dumps)
- **5 feet** – sloping, shoring or a trench box is required
- **6 feet** – guardrails or barriers are required to prevent employees from falling into the trench
- **25 feet** – place a ladder within 25' of each worker

**COLLAPSES PROVIDE NO WARNING.**

**YOU CANNOT JUMP OR MOVE OUT OF THE WAY.**

**EMPLOYEES CAN BE TRAPPED IMMEDIATELY.**

**TRENCHES CAN EXERT UP TO 15,000 LBS. OF FORCE ON THE BODY, CAUSING TOXIC CRUSH SYNDROME AND DEATH.**

**NEVER ENTER AN UNSAFE TRENCH!**

*These advisory materials have been developed from national standards and sources believed to be reliable, however, no guarantee is made as to the sufficiency of the information contained in the material and the Missouri Common Ground Alliance assumes no liability for its use. Advice about specific situations should be obtained from a qualified safety professional.*

