

LEGISLATIVE INTERPRETATIONS

Topic: Definitions of excavation and trench	Issued by: Director, Compliance and Regulatory Review
Statute: <i>General Regulation 91-191</i>	Date Issued: July 18, 2014
Section: 180-188	Date Revised: N/A

182(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), an employee may enter an excavation 1.2 m or more in depth to install bracing if the employee remains a distance from the face of the excavation equal to or greater than the depth of the excavation.

Question:

Sections 180 to 188 of Regulation 91-191, except sub-section 182(2), refer to excavation and trenches. How do I differentiate between an excavation and a trench?

Answer:

The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) defines an excavation as any man-made cut, cavity, trench, or depression in the earth's surface formed by earth removal.

A Trench is a narrow excavation (in relation to its length) made below the surface of the ground. In general, the depth of a trench is greater than its width, and the width (measured at the bottom) is not greater than 4.5 metres.

Further, if a structure is installed in an excavation and reduces the width between the structure and the side of the excavation to 4.5 metres or less, when measured at the bottom of the excavation, then the excavation is also considered a trench.

