

Excavation & Trench Safety Checklist

Daily excavation inspection covering support, access, services, edge protection and atmosphere. · Free template from SiteAudit — [siteaudit.app/templates](#)

PROJECT	EXCAVATION LOCATION	DEPTH	SUPPORT SYSTEM
INSPECTED BY	COMPETENCE	DATE	TIME

Ref	Item	Y / N / N/A	Observation / evidence	Action required	Owner	Due date	Status
1. Before entry							
1	Permit to dig issued and service drawings reviewed						
2	Services located with a CAT and genny and marked on the ground						
3	Support system installed as designed and by trained operatives						
4	Design and calculations available for the support system where required						
5	Atmosphere tested where there is any risk of gas or oxygen deficiency						
2. Excavation condition							
6	Sides supported, battered or benched appropriately for the ground						
7	No signs of movement, cracking, bulging or water ingress						
8	Support system undamaged, tight and complete						
9	Base of excavation stable and free of standing water						
10	Ground conditions unchanged since the last inspection						
3. Edges & surroundings							
11	Spoil, plant and materials set back from the excavation edge						
12	Edge protection, barriers or covers to all open excavations						
13	Excavation lit and marked where it presents a night-time risk						
14	Adjacent structures and foundations monitored for movement						
15	Vehicle exclusion or stop blocks in place near the edge						
4. Access & rescue							
16	Safe means of access and egress within 7.5 m of any operative						

Ref	Item	Y / N / N/A	Observation / evidence	Action required	Owner	Due date	Status
17	Ladders secured and extending above the edge						
18	Rescue arrangements in place and understood						
19	Operatives briefed on the excavation risk assessment						
20	Emergency contact and location details available on site						

How to use this template

1. Excavations must be inspected by a competent person at the start of every shift, after any event likely to have affected stability, and after any accidental fall of material.
2. Ground that stood safely yesterday can fail today. Rain, vibration and surcharge from spoil all change the picture overnight.
3. Nobody enters an unsupported excavation because it is 'only for a minute'. Most fatalities are in trenches under 2 m deep.
4. Record the inspection even when everything is satisfactory — the value of the register is the unbroken sequence.

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