

Worker Safety: Reduce Trenching and Excavation Hazards

Goal Leader: Loren Sweatt, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health

Deputy Goal Leader: Dean McKenzie, Director, Directorate of Construction

Theme: Education, Training, Employment and Social Services; Health

Overview

Goal Statement

- By September 30, 2019, increase trenching and excavation hazards abated by 10 percent compared to FY2017 through inspections and compliance assistance at workplaces covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Challenge

- The primary challenge associated with this goal is to reduce injuries and fatalities by identifying and abating hazards related to trenching and excavation working conditions, given that trenching and excavation may only be one phase of a construction project. Although the risk of a trenching or excavation accident is high in new construction, the risk is not limited to new construction but also may include repair and system upgrades.

Opportunity

- OSHA will reduce injuries and fatalities by targeting workplaces where there are potential trenching and excavation hazards for inspections as well as outreach.
- OSHA will work with industry associations and the public utilities who hire a significant portion of the work to create a public-private effort to impact these injuries and fatalities.
- OSHA will increase inspection activity focusing on trenching and excavation hazards should result in fewer injuries and fatalities – the ultimate outcome for DOL and American workers.

Overview

Opportunity

- Fatalities associated with trenching and excavation hazards are preventable with widely recognized established safety practices. Recently there has been a sharp increase in the number of these fatalities which needs to be addressed in order to prevent further lives from being needlessly lost. Below is some BLS data showing this trend, especially the jump in fatalities between 2015 and 2016.

BLS data on trenching fatalities:

	All industries*	Construction only
2016:	37	33
2015:	25	17
2014:	13	10
2013:	22	17
2012:	17	13
2011:	21	13

* BLS numbers often include fatality events that are outside OSHA's jurisdiction.

Leadership

Leadership

Loren Sweatt, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health
Dean McKenzie, Director, Directorate of Construction

Oversight

OSHA Regional
Administrators (OSHA
Regions 1-10)

Management

OSHA Area Directors

IT Management

OSHA Information
System (OIS) Team

Data Analysis

Directorate of Technical
Support and Emergency
Management (DTSEM) and
Directorate of Construction
(DOC) Leadership and Staff

Goal Structure & Strategies

Goal Statement: *By September 30, 2019, increase trenching and excavation hazards abated by 10 percent compared to FY2017 through inspections and compliance assistance at workplaces covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.*

Strategies:

- Target workplaces where there are potential trenching and excavation hazards for inspections as well as outreach.
- Work with industry associations and the public utilities who hire a significant portion of the work to create a public-private effort to impact these injuries and fatalities.
- Identify which inspections have hazards related to trenching and excavation.
- Determine the best approach for counting the number of trenching and excavation hazards abated resulting from Compliance Assistance activity.
- Update the OSHA Information System (OIS) to be able to identify and count trenching and excavation hazards abated.

Summary of Progress – FY 18 Q2

This is a new priority goal for OSHA and the Agency developed baseline measures for FY 2017.

OSHA currently has a National Emphasis Program (NEP) in place that addresses hazards related to trenching and excavation: the Trenching NEP. The standards in place that address these hazards are:

- 1926.0650 – Scope, application, and definitions applicable to this subpart.
- 1926.0651 – Specific Excavation Requirements.
- 1926.0652 – Requirements for protective systems.

Key Milestones

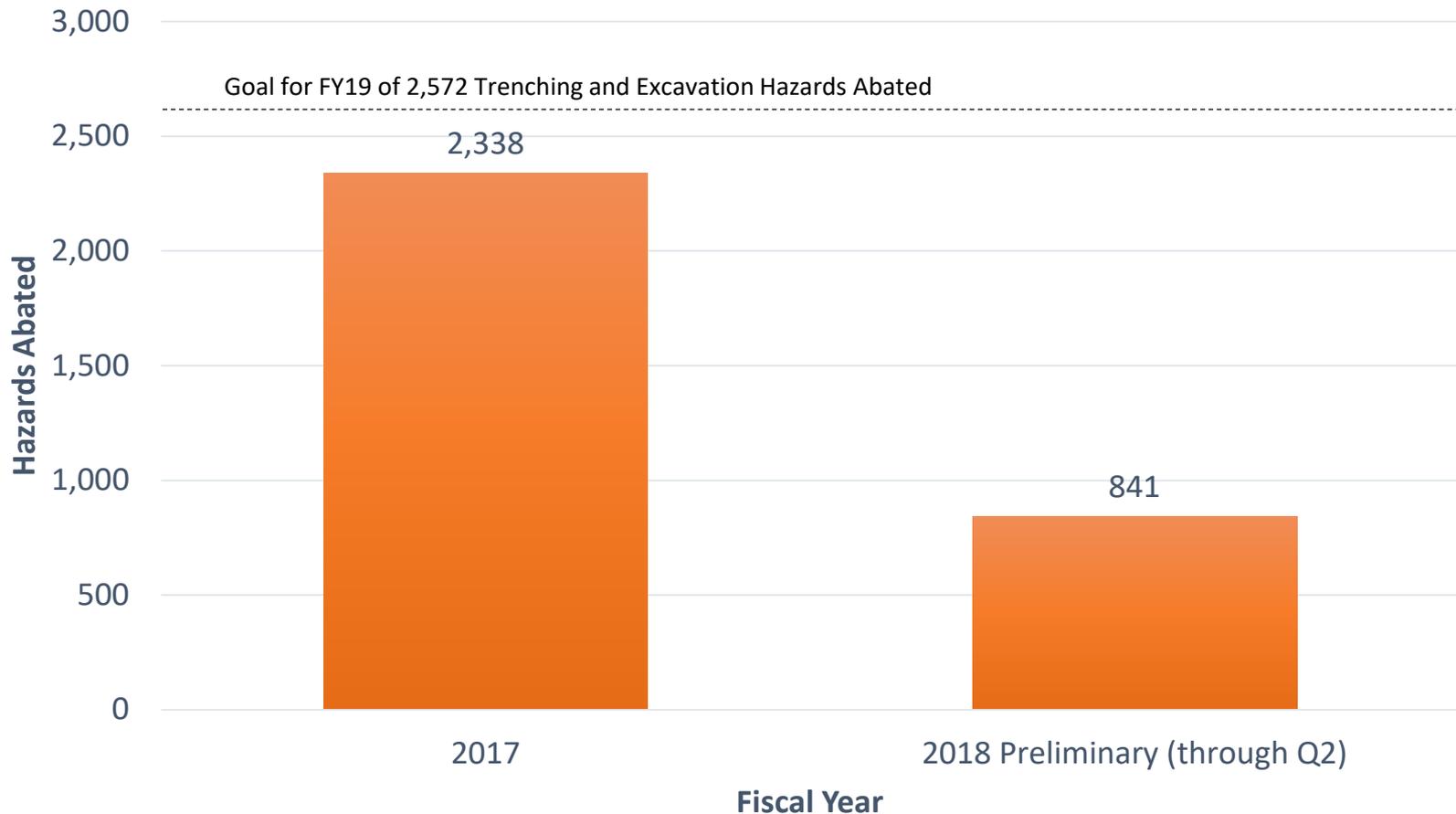
- OSHA will meet this milestone by identifying the hazards and inspections related to trenching and excavation.
- The Agency will continue to implement its Trenching NEP that addresses hazards related to trenching and excavation.

Milestone Summary

Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Owner	Comments
Identify the hazards and inspections related to trenching and excavation, and begin counting these events in the OSHA Information System (OIS)	3/31/2018	Completed	From not completed to completed	Federal Enforcement Division	FY 2017 baseline established
Identify and count compliance assistance efforts and the trenching and excavation hazards abated through those events.	3/31/2018	Completed	From not completed to completed	Federal Enforcement Division	FY 2017 baseline established

Key Indicators

Number of Trenching and Excavation Hazards Abated



*The preliminary data through Q2 FY 2018 is less than half of the FY 2017 baseline number likely due to weather-related factors, since less trenching activity can be expected during the winter months. The number is also affected by the delay from when an abatement occurs to when the abated violation is entered into the OSHA Information System (OIS) database.

Data Accuracy and Reliability

Data regarding inspection activities will come from the OSHA Information System (OIS). Inspection and violation data are entered into the system by OSHA Compliance Officers (CSHO's) who conduct the inspections. The inspection and violation data will then be analyzed to determine the number of trenching and excavation hazards abated. Data regarding compliance assistance activities addressing trenching hazards will be provided from information associated with site visits conducted by the OSHA Consultation Program.

Additional Information

Contributing Programs

Organizations:

- OSHA Regional and Area Offices
- Trade Associations
- State Occupational Safety and Health Agencies

Program Activities:

- OSHA Information System (OIS)
- National and Local Emphasis Programs
- Consultation programs, Compliance Assistance staff, alliances, and partnership programs

Stakeholder Consultations

OSHA will consult with industry associations and the public utilities who hire a significant portion of the work to aid in the efforts to reduce these injuries and fatalities.