

Excavation Edges: Where Will the Next Load Go?

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Why this matters

A spoil pile, parked machine or delivery can add load beside an excavation after its inspection. The surface arrangement affects people working below.

Objective: Verify edge-loading controls before adding or moving a load.

Key hazards or failure points

Edge collapse; falling spoil; rolling materials; equipment approach; vibration; unassessed additional loads.

Practical controls

- Agree spoil, storage and equipment locations with the excavation competent person using the applicable protective-system data and required technical decisions.
- Prevent materials or equipment falling or rolling into the excavation. Maintain the selected setback, retention and traffic arrangements.
- Coordinate every delivery and equipment change. Provide the required warning system where an approaching operator lacks a clear, direct edge view.

Verify It in the Field

From a safe position, compare actual loads and locations with the assessed arrangement; include the next delivery and operating equipment.

Have the competent person verify loading assumptions against the applicable system data. A painted line or two-foot gap alone does not establish stability.

Confirm the installed retention or boundary and warning method before movement. Record the load, location, criterion and responsible person.

Stop and reassess

Hold affected entry and loading for new loads, edge movement, failed retention or uncertain protection. Withdraw exposed workers safely and obtain reassessment.

Ask the crew

1. Which load changes next?
2. What evidence supports this location?
3. Who tells the delivery driver where to stop?

Use this HOP tool — Validate assumptions: Name one assumption about the next load, such as its position or the ground supporting it. Ask what current evidence supports that assumption and who can evaluate it. Keep the delivery or affected entry held until the required assessment is complete.

Sources: OSHA 1926.651; OSHA 1926.652; DOE Vol. 2, pp. 22–23. HOP concepts adapted from DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2 (June 2009). No claim to original U.S. Government work; no government endorsement implied.

Free next step: JHA/JSA planning and field-verification worksheet

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/excavation-edges-surcharge-loads