

# CSI Country Wide Case Study Safety Strategy Discussion

## Construction Safety Investigator



### **Instructions**

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The objective of this tool is to provide field supervisors with information to proactively engage workers and discuss safety related concerns that they may encounter. Safety discussions should not be limited to the subject above and should pertain to the activities that workers will be involved in that may have the potential for safety related exposures.

### **Case Day:**

December 2003

### **Accident Type:**

Excavation Accident - Botched Rescue

### **Relevant laws, rules and codes may include:**

29CFR 1926.20(a)(1), 1926.21(b)(2), 1926.651(k), 1926.652

### **Case:**

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A construction worker was decapitated when panicked colleagues used a backhoe to try to dig him and another man out of a collapsed trench.

### **Accident Detail:**

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The workers were employed by a construction company which had been working in the area and excavated a trench in an attempt to link a row of homes to sewer connections.

While working, the trench suddenly collapsed, burying the two workers. Rather than waiting for emergency rescue personnel to arrive, the two workers' colleagues attempted to rescue them on their own by using a backhoe. In doing so, they decapitated one of the workers.

After the rescue workers arrived, they used ropes to lower themselves into the trench, taking about two hours to shore up the walls of the 35 foot long, 10 foot wide ditch and removed the victim's body. The co-worker who was buried up to the waist was saved when firefighters and an unidentified civilian dug him out with their bare hands and shovels.

### **Reconstructive Safety Evaluation:**

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- What are some of the possible causes of the accident being discussed?
- What actions could have been taken that might have prevented this accident from occurring?

