

PRESS RELEASE
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Trench Safety Stand Down Week: June 17-21

Industry-Wide Trench & Excavation Safety Education Events Start This Week

(Fairfax, Va.) – For the past eight years in June, NUCA has held the innovative Trench Safety Stand Down (TSSD) Week for the utility construction industry. This year’s event, sponsored by NUCA National Partners National Trench Safety, Sunstate Equipment Co. / Trench Safety Rentals, and United Rentals, will occur at hundreds of jobsites across the nation, reaching tens of thousands of our member’s valuable employees.

“NUCA’s Trench Safety Stand Down is an integral part of our industry’s comprehensive safety program,” said Doug Carlson, NUCA’s chief executive officer. “With the full support of OSHA, our mission to reduce injuries and fatalities in the trenches through the training of our excavation workforce has seen a remarkable reach across the industry over the last several years.”

TSSD Week is a series of organized events held by NUCA and industry professionals – both member and non-member organizations – to emphasize the message of safety around jobsite trenches and excavations. Companies can conduct a stand down by taking a break to have a toolbox talk or hold another safety activity to draw attention to the specific hazards related to working in and around trenches and excavations.

The event was first held in 2016 by NUCA, with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) joining as a partner a year later.

TSSD Week is used by industry safety professionals to hold safety training, educational seminars, live demonstrations of trench rescues, and other activities to reinforce the important message of trench safety. Employers are encouraged to review with their employees the hazards associated with these tasks, the regulations enacted to keep them safe underground, and best practices to help keep themselves and their co-workers safe on the jobsite.

In 2023, more than 25,800 industry employees and first responders at over 2,480 jobsites, from 455 organizations, took part in the stand down. Our industry’s employees learned the importance of being safe around jobsite excavations and trenches from peers and experts alike.

NUCA and the utility construction industry members seek out every measure possible to reduce risks on our jobsites, which we all know can be a dangerous place to work if someone is unaware of its hazards. Some of the hazards include sudden cave-in or collapses, which are among the most dangerous hazards in the industry. Recent national statistics on trench injuries and deaths show an increase in fatalities, with OSHA reporting 39 trench collapse deaths in 2022, up from 15 fatalities in 2021. These accidents can be avoided with thorough training in excavation safety procedures and techniques, and the use of safety equipment such as trench boxes and supports.

Participation in TSSD has become more important in recent years, as our industry begins gearing up for more water, wastewater, broadband, electric, and highway projects financed by the federal 2021 infrastructure law supported by NUCA. Our industry is seeking tens of thousands of new employees to work on these projects—and every one of them will need safety training.

June 2024 is also "Trench Safety Month." NUCA is devoting the entire month of June to getting the message out to the public and non-NUCA industry companies about the importance of employee safety when working underground or in and around trenches.

NUCA is again partnering in June with the Trenching Excavation Safety Taskforce (TEST) to share information about staying safe in and around excavations. This industry safety professional partnership, announced in April 2023, will be promoting awareness of trench safety, the many training programs offered to industry members, and to help ensure employees stay safe while building our nation's vital core infrastructure projects.

The social media hashtag is **#TSSD24**.

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About The National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA)

Founded in 1964, the National Utility Contractors Association represents over 2,000 U.S. utility and excavation contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers who provide the materials and workforce to build and maintain our nation's intricate network of water, sewer, gas, telecommunications, and electric infrastructure. NUCA is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2024. NUCA is found online at www.nuca.com, and can be followed on Twitter at **@NUCA_National**. The association's Twitter hashtags are #NUCAdigs and #WeDigAmerica.