



## Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



### Hazardous Atmospheres Inside Excavations Safety Message

When working inside of an excavation, the last thing on most people's mind is the potential for a hazardous atmosphere to develop. That lack of concern may be attributed to the fact that you are usually working outdoors, and the top of the excavation is open. But OSHA's excavation standards require the employer to test the atmosphere inside any excavation that is four feet or deeper any time there is a reasonable potential for a worker to be exposed to a potentially harmful atmospheric hazard. Here are just a few examples of such situations:

- Working inside an excavation located near a landfill.
- Breaching a pipeline located inside of an excavation.
- Contaminated soil created by leaking containers, pipelines, and improper disposal.
- Operating internal combustion-powered tools and equipment inside an excavation.

So our message today is this: Be aware of these, and other, situations where a hazardous atmosphere could be present. And make sure to notify your supervisor or the Competent Person if you become aware of such a situation so they can assess the need to test the atmosphere. And if one is detected, we will take precautionary measures, such as ventilating the excavation, to make sure the atmosphere is safe.