

TOOLBOX SAFETY TRAINING

Company _____ Location _____ Date _____

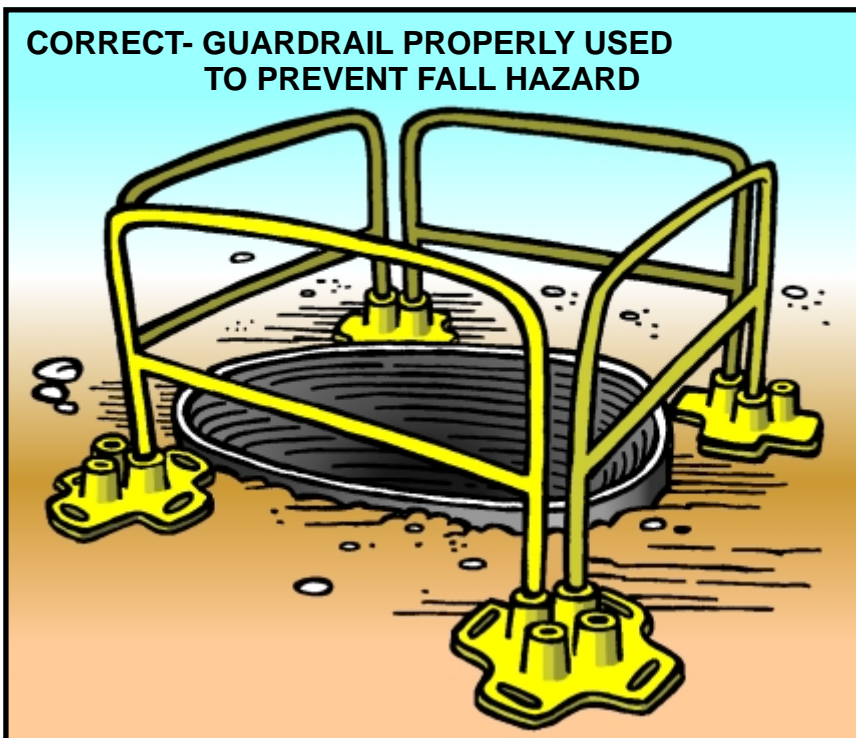
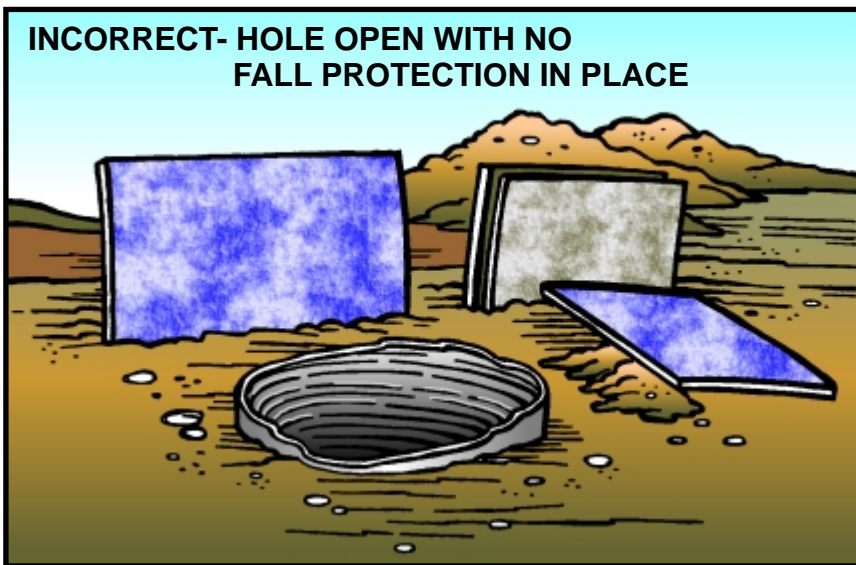
Vol 16 - No 49 TRENCH FALL PROTECTION

During the installation of underground utilities, the trenches and manholes that are worked in will most likely be at depths of five feet and greater. Most employees concern themselves with trench cave-in protection; however, an issue often overlooked is fall protection. The excavations standard 1926.651 (I)(1) states:

...Guardrails which comply with 1926.502(b) shall be provided where walkways are 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above lower levels. The standard also applies to employees working at the edge of trenches and manholes that are at said depths. Since the excavation standard references guardrails from the fall protection standard, let us review some key points.

1. Guardrails must have a top rail, mid rail, and if employees are exposed to potential falling objects, a toe board.
2. Top rails shall be set up 42" plus or minus 3" from the walking/working surface. Mid rails shall be set midway between the walking/working surface and the top rail; usually about 21" high.
3. If set on the edge of the trench or within 6 feet from the edge, the guardrail system must support at least 200 lbs. of outward and downward force. Appendix B in the fall protection standard highlights some materials that can be used to fulfill the requisites.

Keep in mind that guardrails are not the only system that can be used. If no employee will be allowed at the trench edge, a different type of barricade system can be installed. Also remember if the system cannot support at least 200 lbs. it must be erected at least 6 feet from the edge.



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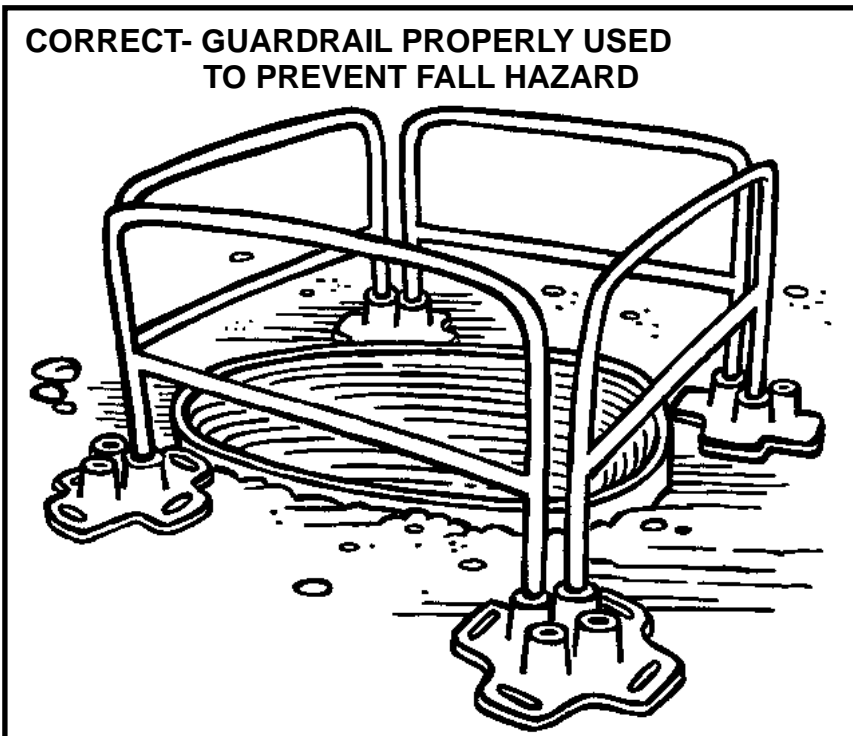
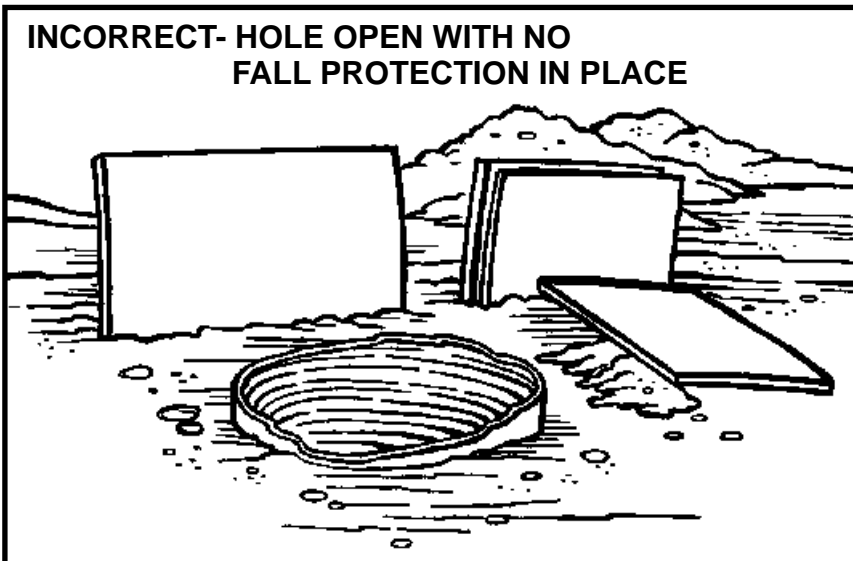
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