

# FATALGRAM 15-01

Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development  
Division of Labor & Safety Standards  
Occupational Safety & Health



**Date of incident:** June 16, 2015

**Industry:** Construction

**Location:** Anchorage, Alaska

**Description of incident:** A 23-year-old construction worker suffered fatal crushing injuries while working in a trench. The worker had been working on a sewer pipe in a trench that measured roughly 7 feet deep by 15 feet across. The fatal incident occurred while the worker was working in an unprotected trench with no benching, sloping, or trench box in use. A trench wall failed and buried the worker up to his waist. The employer attempted to extricate the worker from the trench prior to the arrival of emergency services. An excavator was used during the rescue attempt. The worker was eventually removed from the trench and pronounced deceased at the accident site. Medical examination later revealed that the worker succumbed to injuries from massive blunt force trauma, pelvic and leg fractures, and blood loss.

## **Accident Prevention Recommendations:**

- Ensure protective systems are in place for trench excavations over 5 feet in depth.
- Evaluate soil conditions daily for signs of deterioration and after any occurrence that could have changed conditions in the trench.
- Never utilize heavy equipment to extract an employee from collapsed excavations.
- Only utilize trained personnel to attempt rescue in emergencies.