

## WORKER FATALITY DURING TRENCH BOX DISMANTLING

### Description:

A work crew was on location to dismantle a high arch trench box and then transport the disassembled box from one project work site to another. The disassembly process did not follow the manufacturer's instructions for the safe removal of the strut support pins holding the box together. Consequently, when the last strut support pin was removed from the box, it collapsed, causing a support arch to strike and fatally injure a worker.

### Lessons Learned:

Trench boxes are a protective system used to protect workers from the pressure and weight of soil in the event of a cave-in. It is critical to ensure that processes are followed to prevent unexpected movement of trench box panels which can cause serious harm or death. Not all trench boxes are the same - identify and know the specifications for the equipment that is being used.

### Life Saving Rules:

This safety alert relates to the following [Life Saving Rules](#).



**LINE OF FIRE**



**SAFE MECHANICAL LIFTING**



Watch the [Line of Fire](#) and [Safe Mechanical Lifting](#) microlearning videos.



Example of a trench box



View of incident site, source: CBC News

## What did they learn? What were the recommendations:

1. Ensure supervisors, workers and inspectors are trained in the use and inspection of the specific trench box being used. All trench box systems come with assembly, use and disassembly instructions. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
2. The installation, removal, assembly and disassembly of any trench box must only be done by a competent and qualified person(s) including workers, supervisors and inspectors.
3. Never stand in the line of fire. Ensure everyone on site is positioned to avoid moving objects, vehicles, pressure releases and dropped objects.

For more information, see the [Trenching and Excavation](#) Fact Sheet by The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

Help industry by sharing learnings from an incident. [Submit your Safety Alert.](#)

### SHARE AND COLLABORATE

Energy Safety Canada (ESC) works collaboratively with industry to share information aimed at helping companies of all sizes improve safe work performance.

### DISCLAIMER

Use of this document or any information contained herein is at the user's sole risk. ESC makes no representations and assumes no liability. For further information on these restrictions, go to <http://www.energysafetycanada.com/legal.cfm>

### COPYRIGHT/RIGHT TO REPRODUCE

Copyright for this document is held by Energy Safety Canada, 2020. All rights reserved. Energy Safety Canada encourages the copying, reproduction and distribution of this document to promote health and safety in the workplace, provided that Energy Safety Canada is acknowledged. However, no part of this publication may be copied, reproduced or distributed for profit or other commercial enterprise, nor may any part be incorporated into any other publication, without written permission of Energy Safety Canada.