

UNCW Digging and Excavation Procedure

The following information is required by 29 CFR, Part 1926 – NC Occupational Safety and Health Standards for the Construction Industry Sub Part P-Excavations. This procedure is to provide accountability, applicability and procedures for digging and excavating operations.

SCOPE:

This procedure applies to all holes dug on UNCW property that exceed twenty-four inches (24”), and applies to all persons on UNCW property.

POLICY:

All persons who have a need to dig or excavate must receive written permission prior to digging or excavating. This permission is given based on the location of utilities and the assurance that a “competent person” as defined by NIOSH Standards, Section 651(a) which states: “a competent person means one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings, or working conditions, which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them,” will be on the work site during all excavation.

Any excavation forty-eight inches (48”) or greater must:

- Be provided with an adequate exit (steps, ladder or ramp) every twenty-five feet (25’) if employees are expected to enter and,
- Be tested for hazardous gases or oxygen deficiency if such conditions are likely to exist (excavation near gas mains, laboratory buildings, underground storage tanks, marshes, creeks or sewers).

Any excavation greater than five feet (5’) must:

- Meet the conditions outlined above.
- Have an adequate means of protection (shoring or sloping) and be inspected prior to and during the work shift by a “competent person.”
- The “competent person” must be on site at all times that employees are in the excavation and shall have the authority to stop work if hazardous conditions are detected. The “competent person” shall not be the equipment operator.
- Only persons receiving special training to the satisfaction of the Grounds Superintendent may be qualified as “competent persons.”
- Employees shall not work under loads being handled by digging or lifting equipment.
- If employees enter the excavation, both the removed soil and other work materials should be stored a minimum of two feet (2’) from the edge.

- Personal protective equipment, such as safety vests, safety shoes, hardhat and safety glasses must be worn as appropriate for the work area.
- All soil on the UNCW campus is defined as Type C. The slope will be consistent with the requirements of NIOSH Standards, Section 652 (b.1) which states: “excavations shall be sloped at an angle no steeper than one and one-half feet (1-1/2’) horizontal to one foot (1’) vertical (34 degrees measured from the horizontal).
- During the excavation process the entire work area will be barricaded to prevent unauthorized entry. At night, lighted barricades will be required.
- During backfill operations compaction will occur in six-inch (6”) lifts.
- All UNCW equipment operator(s) will be certified through training and on-the-job observation. This training will be available through the Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) Department.
- Stop logs or other means of stopping a vehicle shall be used when the operator cannot see the edge of the excavation.
- Water must not be allowed to accumulate in an excavation when occupied.
- Excavation near structures should not remove support from that structure.
- UNCW personnel should not perform an excavation over eight feet (8’) deep unless the entire project is approved and supervised by a Certified Engineer.
- UNCW employees shall not work in excavations dug by outside contractors, except when the site has been inspected by a UNCW “competent person.”
- Heavy equipment shall under no circumstances be used to transfer persons other than the operator.

PROCEDURE:

The Director of the Physical Plant or his designee must authorize all digging and excavating on the campus. Any persons desiring permission to dig on the campus must complete and submit a written “**Digging and Excavation Request**” and area sketch to the Director of the Physical Plant, three (3) working days in advance, to provide for proper clearing and investigation. Under emergency conditions, the Director of the Physical or his designee can waive this three-day requirement. This five-part form can be obtained from Physical Plant Administration and must be completed and distributed as outlined in the Digging and Excavation Form Instructions attached.