

# INSURICA ENERGY TIMES

Providing Quality Insight to the Oil & Gas Industry

Summer 2022



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## Site Preparations – Excavating, Trenching and Leveling the Drilling Site

### INTRODUCTION

Site preparation for an oil and gas well usually looks like any other construction site. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) uses Safety and Health Regulations for Construction (29 CFR 1926) to assess safety compliance during this phase of the development of a drilling site.

### PROCESS: LEVELING SITE

The site is leveled (if necessary) with a bulldozer or a grader.

#### Hazards:

- Damaging buried pipelines and cables
- Unpredictable weather changes that create unexpected hazards
- Irritant and toxic plants, pollens and other entrained materials
- Uneven ground that could cause bulldozers to roll over

#### Solutions:

- Perform a site-line location survey.
- Plan for hazards due to unpredictable changing weather.
- After weather changes, conduct inspections for new hazards.
- Protect workers engaged in site clearing from hazards of irritant and toxic plants. Teach workers about available first-aid treatments.
- Provide rollover guards on all equipment used in site-clearing operations.
- Provide overhead and rear canopy guards on rider-operated equipment.

### PROCESS: EXCAVATING AND TRENCHING

The scale and duration of excavating and trenching are minor and site-specific. On some drilling sites, a below-ground-level cellar may

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“ On some drilling sites, a below-ground-level cellar may be excavated.



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be excavated. This is where the main borehole will be drilled. A reserve pit and settling pits may be excavated and used for water or drilling fluid discharges.

**Hazards:**

- Dust and other airborne contaminants can cause respiratory problems or allergic reactions

- Damaging buried pipelines and cables

**Solutions:**

- Wear appropriate respiratory protection.
- Perform a site-line location survey.

Source: Occupational Safety & Health Administration, 2017 Zywave, Inc.



## June is **TRENCH SAFETY MONTH**

From the [National Utility Contractors Association](#):

June 2022 has been declared “Trench Safety Month” by the National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA). This declaration of safety further highlights the association's innovative educational and safety program, the “Trench Safety Stand Down” week, that will be held June 20-24, 2022.

Every June since 2016 NUCA has held the innovative [Trench Safety Stand Down \(TSSD\) Week](#) for the utility construction industry. This year's event will occur at hundreds of jobsites across the nation, reaching tens of thousands of workers.

TSSD Week is a series of organized events held by NUCA and industry members to emphasize the message of safety around jobsite trenches and excavations. TSSD Week is used by industry

safety professionals to hold safety training, educational seminars, live demonstrations of trench rescues and the other activities to reinforce the message of trench safety.

In an effort to grow this strong message of safety, the national association will be leveraging the safety messages of TSSD through NUCA's social media channels, internal publications, and the construction trade press to emphasize several key safety ideas well known through our TSSD materials.

Selecting June as Trench Safety Month is a natural tie-in to the lessons and demonstrations being completed at thousands of NUCA member jobsites during TSSD Week. In 2019, more than 47,000 member employees and first responders at over 4,500 jobsites, from 324 organizations, took part in the stand down. Together, they learned the importance of being safe around their jobsite excavations and trenches from peers and experts alike.

NUCA and the utility construction industry members must seek out every measure possible to reduce risks on our jobsites, which we all know can be a dangerous place to work if someone is unaware of its hazards. According to OSHA, 17 industry employees lost their lives through trench accidents in 2018.

Evidence shows that the key to significantly reducing the risks associated with our industry is employee training and reinforcement through events such as the TSSD Week.

This annual June event is expected to evolve over the following years as the TSSD continues to grow.

Source: © 2022, National Utility Contractors Association



# Hydraulic Fracturing – Flowback

## INTRODUCTION

After fracturing the entire well, workers decrease the pressure at the wellhead and drill out the isolation plugs. A mixture of fracturing fluid and gas or oil flows back out of the well through flow lines into pits or tanks.

## PROCESS: FLOWBACK

### Hazards

- Struck by high pressure lines
- Fires and explosions
- Inhaling hazardous gases or vapors
- Exposure to high noise levels

### Solutions

- Direct all non-essential personnel to stay clear of the work zone.
- Follow procedures to release trapped pressure safely.
- Ground and bond tanks used to hold flowback fluid (also known as frac tanks).
- Route flowback fluid through a gas buster system.
- Use wood gauges to monitor fluid volume in frac tanks.
- Use monitors with lower explosive limits to warn of the presence of flammable gases.
- Wear proper personal protective equipment, such as respiratory, skin and hearing protection, as appropriate for the hazards present.

*Source: OSHA, 2017 Zywave, Inc.*

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