Excavation Inspection Checklist: Daily Trench Form

Frequency	Completed by	Approved by	The checklist
Every shift	Competent person	Site manager	31 checks · 5 sections

INSPECTION DETAILS

Site / project: _____ Excavation ID or location: _____

Maximum depth (m): _____ Width at the bottom (m): _____

Soil type: _____ Protective system: _____

Reason for inspection: _____ Date and time: _____

Services and surroundings

1.	Buried services near the dig have been located and marked before digging **CRITICAL** Check the utility drawings, the locate marks and any detector survey. In the US, the 811 call is made before digging. Ref.: [1] [2] [6]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
2.	Exposed pipes and cables are supported and protected while the excavation is open **CRITICAL** Ref.: [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
3.	Nearby buildings, walls and pavements show no new cracks or settlement, and are supported where the dig could affect them **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
4.	The excavation is fenced off or taped with warning signs so that the public and passers-by are kept out Ref.: [1]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
5.	Where the dig is next to road traffic, workers wear high-visibility clothing Ref.: [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A

Edges, spoil and plant

6.	Spoil, materials and equipment are kept back from the edge, or held by a retaining barrier **CRITICAL** OSHA: at least 2 ft (0.61 m) from the edge. The Turkish regulation gives no figure; set the distance for the soil and depth. Ref.: [1] [2] [5]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
7.	Edges where people could fall in are protected by barriers **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1] [5] [6]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
8.	Vehicles and plant are parked and driven at a safe distance from the edge **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1] [5] [6]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
9.	Where an operator cannot see the edge, stop blocks, barriers or a trained signaller are in use **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
10.	Nobody works under a load being lifted or within the swing of the excavator **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
11.	Walkways over the excavation are sound and have guardrails on both sides Türkiye: at least 80 cm wide in built-up areas. OSHA: guardrails where the walkway is 6 ft (1.8 m) or more above the bottom. Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A

Faces and cave-in protection

12.	The soil has been assessed by the competent person and the assessment still matches what is seen today Re-assess when the soil changes, gets wet or is disturbed. OSHA Appendix A uses at least one visual and one manual test. Ref.: [1] [4]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
13.	A protective system suited to the soil and depth is in place: sloping, benching, shoring or a trench box **CRITICAL** OSHA allows none only in stable rock, or under 5 ft (1.52 m) where the competent person finds no sign of a cave-in. Ref.: [1] [3] [5]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
14.	Shoring or the trench box is installed as designed, with no missing or damaged members **CRITICAL** Look for bent struts, loose wedges, cracked plates and hydraulic leaks. Damaged parts are checked by the competent person before reuse. Ref.: [1] [3]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A

15.	The trench box sits on or close to the bottom, and nobody is inside while it is moved **CRITICAL** OSHA: digging no more than 2 ft (0.61 m) below the box, only if it is rated for the full depth and no soil is lost from behind or below. Mark N/A if no box is used. Ref.: [3]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
16.	Faces and edges show no cracks, bulging, slumping, sloughing or soil running from behind the supports **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
17.	The bottom of the faces has not been undercut **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
18.	Loose rock and soil have been removed from the faces or are held back Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A

Access, air and water

19.	A ladder, stair or ramp is in place close to where people work in the trench **CRITICAL** OSHA: in trenches 4 ft (1.22 m) or deeper, within 25 ft (7.62 m) of lateral travel. Portable ladders extend at least 3 ft (0.9 m) above the landing (OSHA 1926.1053). Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
20.	Nobody climbs in or out on the shoring, struts or trench box Ref.: [1]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
21.	Where bad air is possible, the atmosphere has been tested before entry and the result is safe **CRITICAL** For example near landfill, sewers, fuel or chemical storage. OSHA: test before entry where deeper than 4 ft; oxygen below 19.5 % is deficient. Mark N/A if no such risk. Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
22.	No petrol or diesel engine runs in or next to the excavation unless the fumes are ducted away or the trench is ventilated Ref.: [6] [1]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
23.	Dust is controlled, and work stops if harmful gas or silica dust is detected Ref.: [1]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
24.	There is no standing or rising water in the excavation, or pumping is in place and watched **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
25.	Surface water and runoff are diverted away from the excavation Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A

26.	It is not raining, and the excavation has been re-inspected after any rain, frost or snow **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1] [2] [5]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A
27.	Workers know how to get out to a safe place in a cave-in, flooding or gas release, and rescue equipment is on hand where bad air is possible Ref.: [1] [2]	◯ Pass ◯ Fail ◯ N/A

Result

28.	Every defect found has been reported to the site manager Ref.: [5]	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ N/A
29.	If a critical check failed, everyone is out of the excavation and entry is stopped until it is fixed and re-inspected **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1] [2] [5]	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ N/A
30.	The excavation is safe to work in **CRITICAL** Ref.: [1] [5]	◯ Yes ◯ No
31.	Notes and defects found	Note: _____

Critical check: if it fails, stop and correct it before work continues.

SIGN-OFF

Competent person (inspector)

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Site manager

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Legal basis and references

[1] Türkiye: Yapı İşlerinde İş Sağlığı ve Güvenliği Yönetmeliği (Resmî Gazete, 05.10.2013, 28786) — Annex 4, B, Part II (excavation work) items 62–71; items 52 and 55 on signallers and plant near the pit.

[2] United States: OSHA 29 CFR 1926.651, Specific excavation requirements — (b) underground installations; (c)(2) egress; (d) traffic; (e) loads; (f) warning system; (g) atmosphere and rescue; (h) water; (i) adjoining structures; (j) loose material and 2 ft spoil distance; (k) daily inspection; (l) walkways.

[3] United States: OSHA 29 CFR 1926.652, Requirements for protective systems — (a)(1) cave-in protection and exceptions; (d) damaged materials; (g) shield systems.

[4] United States: OSHA 29 CFR 1926 Subpart P, Appendix A, Soil Classification — Type A/B/C classification by a competent person; visual and manual tests; reclassification when conditions change.

[5] United Kingdom: The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, regulation 22 (Excavations) — (1)–(3) collapse, falls into and overloading of excavations; (4)–(5) inspection by a competent person and no work until remedied.

[6] United Kingdom: HSE, Excavations (construction safety topic) — Edge barriers, plant away from the sides, engine fumes, underground services (HSG47).

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Version 1 · Updated November 19, 2026 · findrisk.net/checklists/excavation-trench-inspection-checklist/