

SCU Excavation & Trenching – Field Guide

This field guide provides key safety requirements for excavation and trenching work at Southern Cross University (SCU). It applies to staff, students, contractors, and others involved in campus or field excavation activities.

Before Work

- Obtain and complete SCU Permit-to-Work for excavation (>300 mm).
- Check for underground services using Dial Before You Dig and service plans.
- Conduct risk assessment and prepare Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS).
- Consult with all PCBUs (e.g., contractors, facilities, supervisors).
- Ensure asbestos and hazardous materials registers are checked.

During Work

- Use appropriate shoring, benching, or battering to prevent collapse.
- Maintain safe entry and exit (ladders, ramps, walkways).
- Keep spoil, plant, and materials at least 1 m from trench edges.
- Continuously monitor for hazardous atmospheres and groundwater ingress.
- Do not allow lone work in or near trenches.

Emergency Preparedness

- Ensure rescue equipment is available and pre-checked on site.
- Have an emergency plan specific to excavation hazards.
- Test and practice emergency procedures periodically.
- Ensure communications are in place with supervisors and SCU Security.

After Work

- Backfill or securely barricade all excavations before leaving site.
- Remove spoil, debris, and plant safely.
- Close out permit-to-work and return to Facilities for recordkeeping.
- Report incidents, near misses, or exposure to hazards via RiskWare.

Remember: Excavation and trenching are high-risk activities. Always stop work if risks are uncontrolled and seek WHS advice immediately.