

LOCATION : Greece
Construction Site

INCIDENT TYPE:RECORDABLE

DATE: 05/07/2017

What happened?

A worker assigned to archaeological activities was working with a wheel barrow to remove the spoil piled when he fell into a benched excavation.

The worker was moving along a ramp of approximately 90 cm between two excavations, benched to four levels.

On the return trip with the empty wheel barrow he walked onto the path backwards instead of moving forward following the usual procedure. Just at the beginning of the path, the soil, frail and dry, gave way under the worker's left foot making him losing his balance and falling on the first step of the benched excavation (37 cm high). The worker fell on his left arm. The incident resulted in the fracture of the left distal radius of the worker.

Incident location

Why did it happen?

Wrong decision to face the ramp backward with the wheel barrow, with no clear vision of the ground where the worker was stepping.

Underestimation of the hazards created by the frailty of the edges of the excavation, that needed to remain open for a long time for this specific activity, exposed to meteorological events and deterioration.

Work method (manual with no backhoe in use to support the activity).

Instability of the soil.

No written instruction for this activity.

How can we prevent recurrence of similar incidents?

- Implement a more thorough segregation, fencing and signalisation policy for the activities.
- Implement the use of crane and big bags to replace use of wheel barrow eliminating the risk of exposure of the worker to a fall when using the ramps.
- Issue a dedicated Method Statement describing in details the activity and inform all involved workers accordingly.



Series of benched excavations with ramps used for wheelbarrow access



Red circle indicates where the IP lost his footing. Entry ramps were dug by a JCB and then loosely backfilled by hand

HSE – is not just what you say, it's what you do!