

MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 29, 2022

For more information:
Robert Baylor, NUCA Director of Communications
703-890-7807, robert@nuca.com

2022 Trench Safety Stand Down Season Concludes *Industry-Wide Event Reinforced Safety Training, Education*

(Fairfax, Virginia) – The National Utility Contractors Association’s (NUCA) Trench Safety Stand Down (TSSD) for 2022 officially ended on September 30. This year’s industry-wide event held in June reinforced a basic fact to all attendees: safety training is critical to a well-functioning utility construction jobsite and an employee’s daily activity.

“Time and time again, evidence shows that the key to significantly reducing the risks associated with our industry is employee training and reinforcement through events such as the Trench Safety Stand Down,” said Mike Flowers, NUCA’s director for safety, training, and education.

For the 2022 event, 23,007 employees participated in a stand down training event held by 345 companies on 1,978 jobsites across the week of June 20-24. The numbers are up this year, coming from 2021’s TSSD events which saw 22,250 employees participating on 344 company’s 2,202 jobsites. The event officially concludes at the end of the summer season, and after all attendee reports possible are collected by NUCA from company safety directors and participants.

The Trench Safety Stand Down (TSSD) was first held in 2016 by NUCA, with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) joining as a partner a year later. The goal of the event is to reach out to the many workers who work in and around trenches and excavations to provide them with information about current excavation requirements and safety procedures for working in trenches. This year’s event occurred at hundreds of jobsites across the nation, reaching tens of thousands of our member’s employees.

The 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.

OSHA’s standard on trenching and excavation (1926.650, Subpart P) requires protective systems for trenches that are 5 feet or deeper, unless the excavation occurs in stable rock. The agency warns that trench collapses are “rarely survivable” because a cubic yard of soil can weigh as much as 3,000 pounds.

OSHA reported that in 2022's first six months, 22 workers have fallen victim to the deadly hazards present in trenching and excavation work – surpassing the 15 fatalities reported for all of 2021. NUCA supported OSHA's actions in early July for increased safety regulation enforcement at excavation sites.

NUCA and the utility construction industry members 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.

Companies can conduct a Trench Safety Stand Down by taking a break each day during the Stand Down week to have a toolbox talk or another safety activity that draws attention to the specific hazards related to working in and around trenches and excavations.

Anyone who wants to prevent trenching and excavation hazards in the workplace can participate in the Stand Down. We encourage anyone working in or around utility construction, residential construction, highway construction, plumbers, military bases, unions, associations, educational institutions, and safety equipment manufacturers to participate.

By reaching as many workers as possible, the number of fatalities and serious injuries that occur each year in the industry can be reduced and make others, such as municipal and industry workers who are also exposed, aware of these serious hazards.

The 2023 TSSD will be held in mid-June. NUCA's webpage on the 2022 TSSD event can be found at nuca.com/tssd.

#

About The National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA)

Founded in 1964, the National Utility Contractors Association represents more than 1,900 U.S. utility and excavation contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers who provide the materials and workforce to build and maintain our nation's intricate network of water, sewer, gas, telecommunications, and electric infrastructure. NUCA is found online at www.nuca.com, and can be followed on Twitter at [@NUCA_National](https://twitter.com/NUCA_National). The association's Twitter hashtags are #NUCADigs and #WeDigAmerica.