

Source - Glasgow Evening Times/HSE

Safety Probe After Worker Buried Alive

**A** safety probe is underway after a workman died after being buried alive in a sewer trench on a housing development.

Keith West, 36, from Thornliebank, near Glasgow was in the trench, which had been dug for a sewer pipe when one side collapsed.

Horrified workmates on the Hamilton site raised the alarm and Mr West was taken to Wishaw General Hospital, but he later lost his fight for life.



The accident happened last weekend on the site of a luxury housing development near the junction of windmill road and Cadzow Street.

Campbell Construction Group, based in Cambuslang Road, Glasgow is in the early stages of building the 24 three-storey flats beside St Mary's Primary School.

A police spokesman advised that the Health and Safety Executive [HSE] had been notified and were now leading the investigation. Following the incident experts from the HSE spent most of the day on site and are continuing their investigations.

The victim was employed by subcontractor Brookfield-based haulage giant WH Malcolm who were contracted by Campbell Construction to carry out groundworks on this housing development.

**A**lthough fatal incidents due to trenches collapsing can be avoided if the appropriate safety measures are taken the table below issued by the HSE continues to demonstrate the dangers associated with excavations.

Year	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05
Fatals	0	1	0	1	1	2	2	4 to date

Practical advice on working in excavations is available from HSE, and includes:

- if appropriate, using trenchless technology such as directional drilling or impact moling, to avoid the need to excavate a trench in the first place;
- if a trench is used, preventing the sides and the ends of trenches from collapsing by battering them to a safe angle or supporting them with proprietary support systems, trench sheets or timber;
- providing suitable edge protection to prevent persons or materials falling into the excavation, and not entering unsupported excavations;
- avoiding surcharging the ground adjacent to the excavation with plant, stored materials, spoil or foundation loads from existing structures;
- never working ahead of the support;
- ensuring there is a suitable means of access and egress;
- remembering that work in shallow trenches can be dangerous, i.e. if the work involves bending or kneeling in the trench; and
- locating existing services in the vicinity of and above the line of the excavation.