CrewSigned

Caught In or Between Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

Caught-in or between is one of the four hazards that kill the most construction workers. It means a person gets squeezed, crushed, pinched or pulled in between two objects. It is different from being struck. Here the danger is getting trapped, and once a body is caught, there is usually no time to get out.

There are three main ways it happens on jobs like ours. The first is a trench or excavation caving in. Soil is heavy, and a small collapse can pin you and crush your chest so you cannot breathe. Any trench five feet or deeper needs a protective system like sloping, shoring or a trench box, unless it is in solid rock. Keep spoil piles and material at least two feet back from the edge, and never go in a trench that has not been inspected that day.

The second is getting pinned by equipment. People get crushed between a backing truck and a wall, between the counterweight of an excavator or crane and something solid, or under equipment that was left on a slope. Stay out of the swing radius of excavators and cranes, and make sure it is barricaded. Never stand between a moving machine and a fixed object. Before you walk near equipment, make eye contact with the operator. Operators, lower blades and buckets to the ground and set the brake before you get off, and chock the wheels on a grade.

The third is getting pulled into moving parts. Rotating shafts, belts, gears, rollers, augers, mixers and power take-offs can grab a sleeve, a glove, a string or hair and pull you in faster than you can react. Keep guards in place. Do not reach into a machine that is running, and lock it out before you clear a jam or service it. Tie back long hair, tuck in loose clothing, and leave rings and chains at home.

Also watch out for material that can shift. Unsecured pipe, stacked block and loads on a forklift can roll or fall and pin someone.

Every time you walk up to a machine or into a trench, ask yourself: if this moves, can I get out of the way? If not, you are standing in the wrong place.

Discussion questions

1. Where on this site could someone get pinned between a machine and a wall, truck or stack of material?
2. Which machines here have moving parts, and are all the guards in place today?
3. How far does the back of the excavator swing, and how have we marked it off?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1926.651, Specific excavation requirements
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.651

SOURCES

OSHA Construction Focus Four Training: https://www.osha.gov/training/outreach/construction/focus-four
29 CFR 1926.602, Material handling equipment: https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.602
29 CFR 1910.212, General requirements for all machines: https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.212

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Caught In or Between Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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