

Construction accident results in death of worker

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

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Readers in the Huntsville area are likely aware that construction sites can be extremely dangerous places, especially when proper safety precautions aren't taken. Employers in Alabama have an obligation not to put workers unnecessarily in harm's way, but sometimes that basic human decency isn't even observed. That seems to be the case with one recent [construction accident](#) that resulted in one worker being buried alive.

A construction crew was building a small mansion when the accident occurred. The fatally injured worker was a 37-year-old carpenter, and he was working inside a 12-foot ditch when he was crushed by the soil surrounding the excavated site. According to investigators, he died almost instantly, and the situation was so dangerous that even attempting to remove the man's body was extremely risky for rescue workers.

Three days prior to the worker's death, local inspectors warned the contractor that the construction site was too dangerous and that construction had to stop.

The inspector's decision was based on a combination of bad weather and poor workmanship that placed the site in danger of collapse. Normally, after such a trench is cut, an implement would be put in place to ensure that the wall wouldn't collapse. The inspector issued a stop-work order that should have been in effect until the contractor shored the trench. However, the contractor ignored the warnings and ordered his employees to keep working, and now one man is dead.

This workplace accident remains under investigation by OSHA, the police, the fire department, and the city's building department.

Though the accident did not take place in Alabama, it serves as an important reminder of the potential dangers when employers and contractors fail to observe proper safety procedures in and around construction sites.

Source: Mercury News, "[Man buried, dies when hillside collapses in Milpitas](#)," Mike Rosenberg, Jan. 30, 2012