OSHA 1926

FOCUS FOUR: CAUGHT BETWEEN

Recognize caught-in hazards. Isolate energy. Prevent burial and crushing.

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Joy Glad, CSP

Dynamic Safety and Environmental LLC

OBJECTIVES

Stop caught-in/between exposure before energy is released

01

Recognize

moving parts, cave-ins, shifting materials, and pinning hazards.

02

Predict

squeeze zones, stored energy, collapse, and unexpected movement.

03

Control

guarding, isolation, blocking, barriers, and protective systems.

04

Verify

inspections, communication, training, and safe access.

Field question: What could close, rotate, shift, collapse, or pin a person?

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WHY IT MATTERS

Crushing—not impact—defines the caught-between event

A caught-in or -between injury occurs when a person is squeezed, crushed, pinched, compressed, or buried between objects or moving parts. Control the energy and the space before entry.

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FOUR PATHWAYS

Caught-between hazards come from four recurring sources

01

MOVING PARTS

Belts, gears, rollers, blades, and nip points pull or trap.

02

BURIED IN / BY

Soil cave-ins or collapsing material engulf and immobilize.

03

PINNED

Vehicles, loads, or equipment trap a person against an object.

04

SHIFTING

Stored material, structures, or attachments slide or collapse.

Watch caught-between examples on YouTube

GotSafety 36-second segment: 2:05–2:41 Opens in your browser

Name the squeeze zone—then isolate energy, secure the load, and keep people out.

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Guard every point where a worker can be pulled or crushed

01	**GUARD**	Cover belts, gears, shafts, rollers, blades, and ingoing nip points.
02	**DE-ENERGIZE**	Stop and isolate equipment before cleaning, adjustment, or jam clearing.
03	**VERIFY ZERO**	Try controls and confirm stored motion, pressure, and gravity are controlled.
04	**KEEP DISTANCE**	Use tools and procedures that keep hands and clothing out of moving parts.



A missing guard turns routine contact into a caught-in event.

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Source: 29 CFR 1926.300(b); OSHA Focus Four

Lower, isolate, and block equipment before anyone enters

01	**LOWER**	Fully lower blades, buckets, dump bodies, and similar attachments.
02	**STOP + NEUTRAL**	Stop the motor, place controls in neutral, and prevent unexpected startup.
03	**BLOCK + CRIB**	Substantially block or crib raised machinery and parts against shifting.
04	**SET BRAKES**	Set parking brakes; on inclines, also chock the wheels.



Hydraulic pressure is not support—substantial blocking carries the load.

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Source: 29 CFR 1926.600(a)(3); OSHA Focus Four

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

Find the squeeze zone before the skid steer moves

01	**CLEARANCE**	Why is a worker standing between the machine and a fixed wall?
02	**OPERATOR**	Has the operator stopped and acknowledged the worker?
03	**ESCAPE**	Where can the worker move if the equipment shifts?
04	**BARRIER**	What exclusion zone should keep people out of the pinch point?



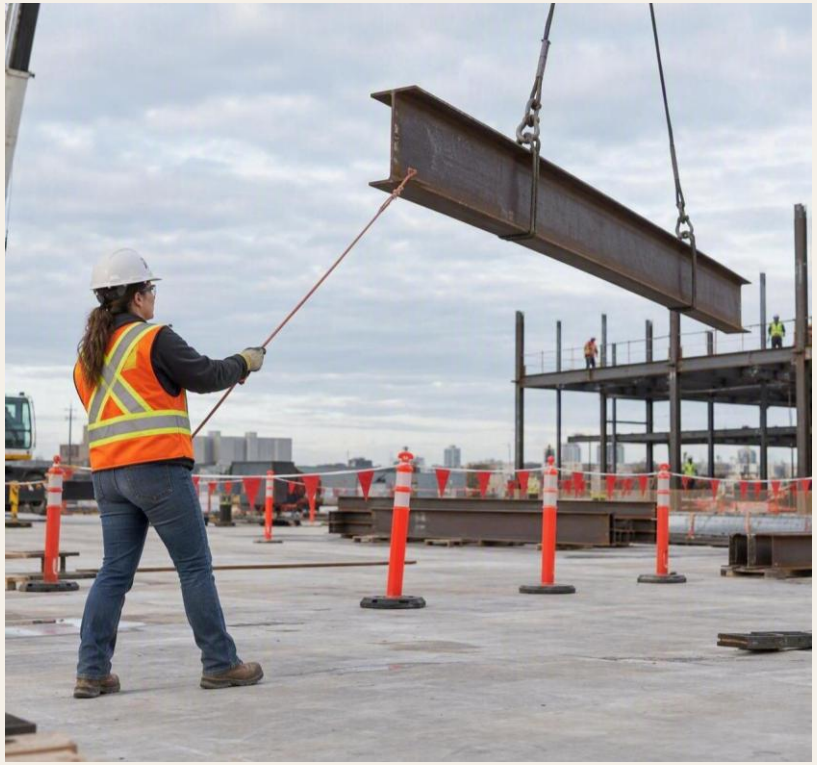
Discuss: Stop equipment, clear the worker, and control entry before restarting.

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Scenario: AI-generated training image; Source: 29 CFR 1926.600–.602

Barricade the swing radius before the counterweight moves

01	**BARRICADE**	Mark and maintain the rotating-superstructure hazard boundaries.
02	**TRAIN**	Teach workers to recognize the counterweight pinch/crush zone.
03	**INFORM**	Tell the operator before entering a hazard area that is out of view.
04	**CONFIRM CLEAR**	Do not move until the operator knows the worker has left the hazard area.



The counterweight can pin a person against structure, material, or equipment.

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Source: 29 CFR 1926.1424

Use a protective system before anyone enters the trench

01	**INSPECT**	A competent person checks conditions daily and after hazard-increasing events.
02	**PROTECT**	Use sloping, benching, shoring, or shielding when the standard requires it.
03	**SET BACK**	Keep spoil, material, and equipment at least 2 feet from the edge.
04	**SAFE ACCESS**	For trenches 4 feet or deeper, provide egress within 25 feet of travel.



A cave-in can bury and immobilize a worker in seconds.

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Source: 29 CFR 1926.651–.652

Keep people out of travel paths and rotating crush zones

01	**MAP THE PATH**	Identify travel, turning, counterweight, and blind-area pinch zones.
02	**SEPARATE**	Use routes, barriers, and exclusion zones before movement starts.
03	**COMMUNICATE**	Use agreed signals; never assume the operator sees you.
04	**STOP FIRST**	Approach only after the equipment stops and the operator acknowledges you.



Eye contact is a checkpoint—not permission to enter.

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Source: 29 CFR 1926.601–.602; 1926.1424

Substantially block raised parts before work begins

01	**LOWER**	Lower blades, buckets, and dump bodies whenever work allows.
02	**BLOCK**	Use substantial blocking or cribbing sized for the expected load.
03	**NEUTRALIZE**	Place controls in neutral, stop the motor, and control stored energy.
04	**SECURE**	Set brakes and chock wheels where equipment could move.



Never place your body under a load supported only by hydraulics or a jack.

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Source: 29 CFR 1926.600(a)(3)

Chock, stack, and secure materials before they shift

01	**STACK**	Rack, block, interlock, or otherwise secure tiers against collapse.
02	**CHOCK**	Use chocks and dunnage sized for pipe, conduit, drums, or cylinders.
03	**STAGE SAFELY**	Keep aisles clear and store material away from active equipment paths.
04	**HANDS CLEAR**	Use tools and positioning that keep body parts out of release paths.



Stored material can move without warning when a restraint is removed.

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Source: 29 CFR 1926.250(a); 1926.600(a)(3)

A spotter works only when the crush zone stays clear

01	**PLAN SIGNALS**	Agree on standard hand or radio signals before movement starts.
02	**ONE DIRECTION**	Use one designated signaler and stop when instructions conflict.
03	**MAINTAIN VIEW**	Keep the spotter visible to the operator and outside the travel path.
04	**STOP ON LOSS**	If visual or radio contact is lost, stop until communication is restored.



A spotter supports separation; a spotter does not replace it.

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Source: 29 CFR 1926.601–.602; 1926.1424

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

Scan the trench edge, protective system, access, and equipment

01	**PROTECTION**	Where is the required sloping, shoring, shielding, or stable-rock exemption?
02	**SPOIL PILE**	Are soil and materials kept at least 2 feet from the edge?
03	**EQUIPMENT**	Could the excavator overload the edge or strike a worker?
04	**EGRESS**	Is safe access located within 25 feet for a trench 4 feet or deeper?



Discuss: Stop entry. Install protection, set back spoil, and provide safe access.

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Scenario: AI-generated training image; Source: 29 CFR 1926.651–.652

KNOWLEDGE CHECK 1 OF 3

A machine jams. What comes before reaching the point of operation?

A — Reach in after the machine stops
B — De-energize and isolate it, then restore the required guard
C — Wear gloves and work quickly

Choose, then press the space bar.

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ANSWER 1 OF 3

De-energize and guard the point of operation before clearing the jam

Exposed moving parts and points of operation must be guarded. Stop and isolate the equipment before access, verify it cannot move, and restore the guard before operation.

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KNOWLEDGE CHECK 2 OF 3

A 6-foot trench is not stable rock. What cave-in protection is required?

A — A hard hat and high-visibility vest
B — An adequate protective system designed under the standard
C — A verbal warning from the competent person

Choose, then press the space bar.

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ANSWER 2 OF 3

Use an adequate protective system unless a listed exception applies

OSHA requires cave-in protection unless the excavation is entirely in stable rock, or it is less than 5 feet deep and a competent person finds no indication of a potential cave-in.

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KNOWLEDGE CHECK 3 OF 3

What is required before anyone works under a raised loader bucket?

A — Hydraulic pressure alone
B — Lower or substantially block it; neutralize controls, stop the motor, and set brakes
C — A spotter standing nearby

Choose, then press the space bar.

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ANSWER 3 OF 3

Lower or substantially block raised equipment before anyone enters

OSHA requires raised heavy equipment or parts to be substantially blocked or cribbed against falling or shifting. Lower attachments when possible, neutralize controls, stop the motor, and set brakes.

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