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Excavation Safety Controls Checklist: Access, Edges, Lights

Excavation Safety Controls Checklist to verify access, edges, lighting and exclusion zones. Interactive checklist, commentable and export as PDF/Excel for evidence.

Project:	
Date:	
Filled by:	

Access and Egress	
1	Confirm a defined pedestrian route from site access to the excavation aligns with the plan; maintain clear width ≥0.6 m, anti-slip surface, and no standing water. Evidence: measured width, photos before shift, foreman initials.
2	Provide ladders within 10 m travel of work areas; set at 1:4 angle, tie-off at top and bottom, and extend ≥1 m above landing. Evidence: photo showing tie points and tape-measured extension.
3	Install ramp or stair access for frequent use; ramp gradient ≤1:4 with timber cleats at 300 mm centres and handrails both sides. Evidence: gradient measured with inclinometer, photos, supervisor sign-off.
4	Keep egress points free of spoil, hoses, and cables; maintain 1 m setback for stockpiles and materials from the edge. Evidence: time-stamped photos each shift change.
5	Control water and mud at access points with pumps, mats, and brushing; surfaces dry and firm underfoot. Evidence: photos and pump ID recorded in log.

Edge Protection	
6	Install guardrails: top rail 1.1 m ±0.1 m, mid-rail, and toe board ≥150 mm; gaps <470 mm. Evidence: tape measure photo and overall edge protection photo.
7	Set pedestrian barriers ≥2 m back from the excavation edge unless a designed platform exists; connect panels securely to prevent displacement. Evidence: layout photo and measured setback.
8	Maintain spoil and materials setback ≥0.6 m from edge with a bund ≥200 mm high to prevent roll-in. Evidence: photos with measurements and operator acknowledgement.
9	Re-inspect guardrails and barriers after depth increases >0.5 m or heavy rain; retighten fixings and replace damaged components immediately. Evidence: inspection log entry and photos before/after.

Lighting and Visibility	
10	Achieve ≥200 lx at workface and ≥50 lx on access routes using a calibrated lux meter; record three readings per area. Evidence: lux readings (lx), device ID, photos.
11	Position lighting to avoid glare and harsh shadows; aim floodlights with downward angle <30° to line of sight and cross-light corners. Evidence: night photo from operator viewpoint.
12	Provide emergency lighting on egress routes with backup duration ≥60 minutes; test function monthly and label last test date. Evidence: function test record and label photo.
13	Protect electrical leads with IP65 fittings and elevate where possible; supply 230 V circuits via RCD ≤30 mA with recorded test. Evidence: RCD test button result, device serial, photo.
14	Use reflective edge markers and high-visibility mesh/tape along barriers; verify retroreflectivity at night with a headlamp/vehicle lights. Evidence: night photos along full length.

Exclusion Zones and Traffic Control	
15	Mark plant exclusion radius as excavator tail-swing plus ≥1 m; install barriers or cones and paint ground lines. Evidence: measured radius sketch and photos.
16	Keep plant wheels/tracks ≥1 m from the edge unless a designed platform exists and approved; use physical stops/bunds. Evidence: measurement photo and supervisor approval record.
17	Deploy a trained spotter maintaining radio contact with operators; conduct radio check at shift start and record call signs. Evidence: radio check log and spotter name.
18	Install “No Entry” and “Authorised Personnel Only” signs at eye level every ≤10 m along approaches. Evidence: photos covering each approach segment.
19	Control access via a single entry point with a marshal or lockable gate; verify permits-to-enter where required. Evidence: permit copy or gate control log.

Emergency Preparedness and Monitoring	
20	Brief crew daily on current excavation stage, access routes, exclusion boundaries, and lighting plan; all attendees sign. Evidence: toolbox talk record with date and signatures.
21	Monitor weather and ground for sloughing or cracks; pause work during heavy rain and revalidate controls before restart. Evidence: weather app screenshot and re-inspection checklist.
22	Stage rescue gear at entry: stretcher or retrieval device and first aid kit within 25 m; check expiry dates. Evidence: inventory checklist and photos.

Comments:

Filled by:

Signature:

Introduction	How to use this checklist
Excavation Safety Controls Checklist helps teams verify access and egress, edge protection, lighting, and exclusion zones as the dig progresses. This excavation access and egress focus prevents slips and delays; robust trench edge protection and plant exclusion zones reduce falls, collisions, and roll-ins; and appropriate temporary lighting maintains visibility during early mornings, evenings, and night work. The scope is intentionally narrow: stage-appropriate controls for people and plant around open excavations; shoring design and structural stability calculations are excluded and addressed separately per approved project specifications and authority requirements. The outcome is a safer, tidier, and more efficient workface, with fewer stoppages, documented evidence, and clear roles for operators, spotters, and supervisors. Use this checklist to plan controls for initial breakout, mid-depth digging, and final trimming, updating as conditions change after rain or depth increases. Tick items, add comments, attach photos and readings, and export to PDF/Excel with a QR code for verification.	1. Preparation: review excavation drawings, sequencing, and stage; assemble tools—tape, inclinometer, lux meter, radios, camera; confirm available barriers, signs, ladders, ramps, lighting towers, RCDs, and first aid. 2. Open the interactive checklist on a mobile or tablet. Select the excavation area and stage (initial, mid-depth, final), then assign responsible persons for access, edges, lighting, and exclusion controls. 3. Walk the route clockwise from approach to egress, then anti-clockwise for a second pass. Take measurements, note nonconformities, and add time-stamped photos directly to the relevant item comments. 4. Hold a short huddle with operators and spotter to validate exclusion boundaries and lighting orientation. Perform radio checks, lux checks, and ladder tie checks; record readings and names in the app. 5. Resolve issues or assign actions with due dates. When complete, export the checklist as PDF/Excel and share with the supervisor and principal contractor for review. 6. Sign-Off: capture digital signatures from site supervisor and foreman. Archive the signed record with its QR code for authentication and future auditing.