

Trencher Safety & Operating Procedures

Objective: to familiarize crew members with the safe operation of a trencher.

Training Materials: trencher, manufacturer's manual.

Personal Protective Equipment: work boots, hard hat, gloves, long pants, eye protection, hearing protection.

Lesson: *There are two types of trenchers: ride-on and walk-behind. Walk-behind trenchers are better suited for tight spaces. Both types have three basic operations systems to be aware of:*

- 1. The ground drive which moves the machine while digging the trench.*
- 2. Trenching articulation including boom and chain-drive controls.*
- 3. An auger that places trenched soil beside the trench for backfilling.*

The teeth of the chain do the actual digging. There are different teeth for different soils and applications. Cupped teeth do well in most soils, and carbide teeth are suitable for hard ground or soil with a lot of buried debris.

Proper tension on the chain is critical (just like a chain saw). Poorly adjusted chains wear out quickly. The operator's manual will specify the correct tension for the trencher model. Tension should be checked and adjusted regularly as chains stretch with normal use. Oiling chains is not recommended as it attracts dirt particles and increases wear and tear.

Safety concerns

Wearing the correct Personal Protective Equipment is important when operating a trencher. Eye protection must be worn.

Never operate a trencher unless you have been properly trained in its correct and safe use. Always complete a circle check before starting the trencher each day.

Call before you dig!!

Do not remove protective shields or guards. Lower the trencher boom to within a few inches of soil. Engage the chain at slow speed. Make sure you have control of the trencher when engaging the chain.

Never make sharp turns while digging.

When raising the boom, disengage the chain just as it clears the trench.

Make sure the engine is turned off before performing any adjustments, maintenance or to clear a jammed chain.

• It cannot be repeated often enough, before trenching any site, make sure the underground utilities have been located! Don't take any chances - never dig without calling for a location.

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