



Virginia
Regulatory
Town Hall

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Periodic Review / Retain Regulation Agency Background Document

Agency name	Department of Labor and Industry/Safety and Health Codes Board
Virginia Administrative Code (VAC) citation	16 VAC 25-170-10 et seq.
Regulation title	Virginia Excavation Standard, Construction Industry
Document preparation date	June 30, 2004

This form is used when the agency has done a periodic review of a regulation and plans to retain the regulation without change. This information is required pursuant to Executive Orders 21 (2002) and 58 (1999).

Legal basis

Please identify the state and/or federal legal authority for the regulation, including (1) the most relevant law and/or regulation, and (2) promulgating entity, i.e., agency, board, or person.

Virginia Code section 40.1-22(5) states that ". . .the Board shall adopt the standard which most adequately assures, the extent feasible, on the basis of the best available evidence, that no employee will suffer material impairment of health or functional capacity. However, such standards shall be at least as stringent as the standards promulgated by the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (P.L. 01-596)". Also, Federal OSHA mandates that State Plan states be at least as effective as Federal OSHA. This regulation is identical to current Federal OSHA standards for Excavation except for the section that provides for application of any requirements under the Virginia Confined Space Standard for the Construction Industry, 16 VAC 25-140-10 et seq., where that standard is more stringent.

Alternatives

Please describe all viable alternatives for achieving the purpose of the existing regulation that have been considered as part of the periodic review process. Include an explanation of why such alternatives were rejected and why this regulation is the least burdensome alternative available for achieving the purpose of the regulation.

The alternatives considered for this regulation were whether to retain the existing regulation as promulgated or repeal the regulation and adopt the federal identical excavation regulation for the construction industry. During previous regulatory review, the Department established an independent review panel to consider the need for the standard or whether it should be eliminated. The panel recommended retention of regulation in its present form. At this time, the Department is not aware of any alterations in the regulatory environment that would alter that assessment.

The repeal of this regulation would result in the implementation of the federal identical regulation for excavation work in construction industry. By retaining the current regulation, employees are more adequately protected when engaged in confined space work in excavation work in construction. Based on previous and the current review, the Department has determined that the current regulation is the least burdensome alternative for the protection of employees in this area.

Public comment

Please summarize all comments received during the public comment period following the publication of the Notice of Periodic Review, and provide the agency response. Please indicate if an informal advisory group was formed for purposes of assisting in the periodic review.

No public comments were received on this regulation during the public comment period which began May 3, 2004. The agency and the Safety and Health Codes Board did not establish an informal advisory group for the purpose of assisting in the periodic review.

Effectiveness

Please indicate whether the regulation meets the criteria set out in Executive Order 21, e.g., is necessary for the protection of public health, safety, and welfare, and is clearly written and easily understandable.

The regulation has two goals:

1. Reduce the incidence of construction fatalities of Virginia workers due to workplace exposure to known hazards.
2. Protect the public's health, safety and welfare with the least possible cost and intrusiveness to the citizens and businesses of the Commonwealth.

The primary goal of this regulation is to prevent injuries and deaths of construction industry employees while they are working in excavation areas that also meet the definition of confined space. It provides minimum protections against exposure to hazardous chemicals and hazardous atmospheres and engulfment by physical hazards in excavation areas. It also provides protections against exposure to improperly energized equipment which might pose a crushing hazard, and exposure to electrical or explosive hazards in excavation areas defined as confined spaces. Since promulgation of this regulation, there has not been any confined space related fatalities on construction worksites, during the excavation phase.

The regulation is clearly written and easily understandable.

Result

Please state that the agency is recommending that the regulation should stay in effect without change.

The Department of Labor and Industry and the Safety and Health Codes Board recommend retaining the regulation without change.

Family impact

Please provide an analysis of the regulation's impact on the institution of the family and family stability.

This regulation has no impact on the institution of the family or family stability.