

7. Re: Fatality Near 14th Avenue and Davies Street
(Item 21, Report No. 28, April 24, 1972)

Council on April 24, 1972, received a report concerning the death of a blind man who fell to his death in an excavation near 14th Avenue and Davies Street on April 8, 1972. Council asked to be informed if the report arising out of the Coroner's Inquiry provided any additional information on the cause of the fatality.

The Deputy Engineer advises that the findings of the jury agree with the Engineering Department's assessment that the contractor was not negligent in his manner of construction and precautions taken to safely secure the excavation prior to this tragic accident.

The jury has recommended the following three alternate methods of protecting future excavations:

- (a) complete backfill
- (b) suitable covering
- (c) fencing

Complete backfilling each time an excavation has to be left unattended would be an impractical method since re-excavation and pipe relocation would be required in order to commence the following day's work.

Suitable covering would consist of a plywood decking supported by wooden beams such that the entire excavation would be covered. In many cases this would involve a large area to be covered and would be generally impractical in this regard, except if an extraordinarily long delay in backfilling the excavation is anticipated. It should be noted that theft of plywood materials could be a problem in that the excavation could be made unsafe overnight. It could well be better to temporarily backfill in such cases with attention being given to diverting traffic around a soft fill area.

Fencing off the excavation area would in most cases seem to be the simplest and most satisfactory method of protecting excavations. Generally excavating equipment along with flashing barricades are used to provide a barrier preventing accidental access to the excavation. An improvement on this would be to secure the area by means of ropes secured by tying to the construction equipment and onto steel posts driven into the ground.

This is for the information of Council.

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