



National  
Operational  
Guidance

## Control measure

**Safe system of work: Unstable or collapsed natural or built environments**



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

Developed and maintained by the NFCC

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## Control measure - Safe system of work: Unstable or collapsed natural or built environments

### TRAINING SPECIFICATION

#### Knowledge and understanding

Control measure element	Learning outcome
What activities a fire and rescue service may need to carry out for an unstable or collapsed natural or built environment	Understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The types of activity that may be required</li> <li>• The precautions that may need to be taken</li> </ul>
Assessing an unstable or collapsed natural or built environment	Understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for early assessment</li> <li>• The need for specialist advice</li> <li>• Who can provide specialist advice</li> <li>• The need to look for signs of collapse</li> </ul>
Precautions to take before committing personnel if the support system has been compromised	Understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to liaise with the responsible person or a competent person to determine a safe system of work</li> <li>• The need to minimise the number of personnel committed to the hazard area</li> </ul>
Consider additional hazards	Understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The incident may also involve:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working at height</li> <li>- Working near unguarded edges</li> <li>- Working in confined spaces</li> <li>- Restricted access and egress</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The hazards presented by additional loading to the area</li> </ul>



## Practical application

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### Control measure element

### Learning outcome

Avoid applying additional loads to the opening, such as fire and rescue service vehicles, equipment and personnel

Demonstrate the ability to:  
Appropriately locate fire and rescue vehicles, equipment and personnel

Consult with the responsible person or competent person to establish a safe system of work for an unstable or collapsed natural or built environment

Demonstrate the ability to:

- Establish a safe system of work using information obtained from the responsible person or competent person

Consider requesting specialist advice regarding unstable or collapsed natural or built environments

Demonstrate the ability to:

- Request appropriate specialist advice

Identify the type of material being excavated and the height and angle of an excavated face

Demonstrate the ability to:

- Consider the properties of an excavation

Have emergency procedures in place for unstable or collapsed natural or built environments

Demonstrate the ability to:

- Establish emergency procedures before committing personnel to the hazard area

Ensure that minimum numbers of personnel work in the hazard area

Demonstrate the ability to:

- Control the number of personnel in the hazard area

Assess and continuously monitor the hazard area for signs of further collapse of an unstable or collapsed natural or built environment

Demonstrate the ability to:

- Monitor the hazard area for signs of further collapse



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**Control measure element**

Consider spreading the load of equipment or personnel to reduce the pressure on the opening

**Learning outcome**

Demonstrate the ability to:

- Risk assess and consider spreading the load of equipment or personnel
- Be aware that early signs of collapse may be hidden by materials used to spread the load