

Raleigh's recent trench collapse tragedy highlights the need for sophisticated legal representation when a worker or contractor suffers serious injury or death on a job site. [Injuries from a tragedy on a construction site](#) invite be some of the most complex legal scenarios a victim can face.

First, the employment relationship between the victim and the at fault party or perhaps even fellow contractor can, if not properly investigated, serve as a bar to any claims for relief by the victim. As a general rule in North Carolina, a victim can not make a claim against their employer unless it is a [Worker's Compensation claim](#). But on a construction site, whether its trench work, pipe laying or building construction, at any given time dozens or more contractors are working on the same site. The employment relationship often comes down to a matter of contract law.

These employment contracts are sophisticated and require a complex legal analysis to determine "who works for who" and which if any contractors are responsible for safety at the job site. While the entity with the "general contractor" title is usually involved in overall safety of the site, it still may be that one or more independent contractors are individually responsible for their own equipment or operations and have the duty to ensure that they do no harm to fellow contractors on the work site. Victims and their families should seek legal assistance immediately after tragedies like the one experienced in Raleigh this week, so that witnesses can be identified as early as possible to ensure the appropriate employment relationship exists to bring a claim for relief. As many of our former clients who were injured on a construction site would say, Worker's Compensation benefits are limited and often times not nearly enough to compensate a victim or the family he or she leaves behind.