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## Arizona Construction Worker Dies After Trench Collapse on Job Site

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A 44-year-old construction worker tragically lost his life earlier this week after being buried beneath several feet of soil in Goodyear, Arizona. The incident occurred Monday afternoon when a trench unexpectedly collapsed, trapping the worker under six to seven feet of loose earth.

The victim, identified as Ronald Andrew Baquera Jr., also known as “Ronnie,” had been working at a construction site when the collapse occurred. Emergency crews arrived just six minutes after receiving the call, but were quickly forced to transition from a rescue to a

recovery operation due to the severity of the situation. Despite nearly 13 hours of efforts, Baquera's body was not recovered until 2 a.m. the following morning.

Baquera, remembered by friends and family as a devoted father, leaves behind two sons and a daughter. Melissa Prado, the mother of two of his children, told *ABC 15 News*, "My daughter is really torn up... she spends almost every day with him." She added that her son was angry and struggling with the loss, describing Baquera as someone whose greatest passion was his children.

According to the *Arizona Republic (AZ Central)*, crews encountered major difficulties during the recovery process due to unstable conditions and the presence of sensitive underground infrastructure, including gas lines. Specialized equipment was required to avoid further collapse or additional hazards.

Fred Gonzalez, another construction worker who had been assigned to a nearby trench just days after the fatal incident, described the site as "eerie." He told *AZ Central*, "The trench they were working in was shored up with a metal box-like structure. It can happen," acknowledging the inherent dangers in underground construction work.

In honor of Baquera's life, a candlelight vigil was held Friday. Nate Costly, a lifelong friend, organized the event and shared a tribute on Facebook, calling Baquera a "loving father and a loyal friend, brutally honest, endlessly caring, and unforgettable."

Among those paying tribute was Shatera Williams, who had known Baquera since childhood. She performed a heartfelt gospel song during the vigil and described him as a "fixer", someone who used either laughter or his hands to resolve problems.

The Industrial Commission of Arizona (ICA), working with state partners, has opened an investigation into the incident to determine whether safety protocols were followed. Charles Carpenter, a spokesperson for Arizona's workplace safety agency, confirmed that such investigations typically take four to five months to complete.

As construction continued at the site in the aftermath, with sidewalks being finished and landscaping underway, the memory of Baquera remained fresh among colleagues and loved ones. His death highlights the ever-present dangers of trench work and the need for continued emphasis on workplace safety in the construction industry.