

Work Safe Bulletin

Single Trowels & Elevated Slabs

The Cement Finishing Labour Relations Association represents the labour relations and safety interests of the cement finishing industry across Ontario.

The purpose of this document is to provide specific hazard information and promote discussion of safe work practices.

This bulletin does not contain a full analysis of the law, nor does it constitute a legal opinion. CFLRA is not liable for any damages resulting from the use of this information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 905-582-9825 or by e-mail at info@cflra.ca

CFLRA

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Background:

The operation of single float/trowel machines is commonplace in elevated slab construction.

Hazard Concerns:

Guardrails may not be strong enough to stop the travel of this equipment when in full motion. Slab protrusions may catch the trowel or float edge and cause the machine to kick-back suddenly.



Recommendations:

Each project has unique characteristics that require careful consideration. It is strongly recommended that this issue be discussed at the preconstruction meeting with your safety representative. To reduce the possibility of an incident, it is recommended that the following be considered:

- Only trained cement finishers shall operate a single trowel finishing machines.
- The finishing machine should not be operated without the protective outer bump ring attached.
- The “dead-man” switch should be checked prior to starting work each day, and by each operator of the machine prior to its operation (the machine should stop quickly when the switch is activated)
- The operator should pay careful attention to avoid hitting any protrusions from the concrete and shall finish around these areas by hand (Note: the placing crew should identify hazards to finishing at the time of concrete placement).
- The operator should never operate a trowel machine with his back to the slab edge or slab opening at any time. When finishing near a slab edge or opening, the operator should not place himself between the machine and the slab edge or opening.
- The operator should not walk backwards towards a slab edge or a slab opening at any time.
- The operator should not be tied to, or restrained by, the equipment at any time.
- The trowel machine should not be operated within the handle radius of another worker.

Further references:

- Occupation Health and Safety Act & Regulations for Construction Projects
- Equipment manufacturers operation / instruction manual.