

Work Safe Bulletin

Cement Burns

The Cement Finishing Labour Relations Association is an employer organization promoting labour relations, skills training and trade safety in 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. The 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 289-837-1627 or by e-mail at safety@cflra.ca.

Visit us online at
www.cflra.ca



August 25, 2017

Hazard:

Wet cement is a highly alkaline material that causes severe burns to skin and eyes. This chemical burn can persist even after you are no longer in contact with the wet cement material.

Operational Procedure Considerations:

It is strongly recommended that this issue be discussed with all concrete workers. To reduce the possibility of an incident, it is recommended that the following be considered:

1. It is important to wear waterproof clothing when working with cement and concrete, as a burn can occur through fabric clothing (including wool gloves). Wear protective gear such as knee high rubber boots, knee pads, long sleeve shirts, safety glasses and waterproof gloves. Tuck pants into boots and duct tape them shut if possible.
2. Avoid getting wet concrete inside your boots, clothing and gloves (check regularly). Remove any rings or watches to prevent cement from getting stuck behind them.
3. If any cement or concrete material should get in your eye, then you should immediately flush it with clean drinkable water for 15 minutes and seek medical assistance.
4. Should your skin come into contact with fresh wet concrete, it's important to wash it off with PH neutral soap and clean drinkable water as soon as possible (not the bucket you clean your tools in). Some Concrete Finishers bring vinegar with them which can neutralize the cement burn if used quickly.
5. You should remove any wet or contaminated clothing immediately as the longer the wet cement is in contact with your skin, the more severe the burn will be.
6. It is important to remember that the more frequently you're exposed to wet concrete, the faster you may develop an allergic sensitivity.



Further references:

- US Department of Labour: [Preventing Skin Problems from Working with Portland Cement](#)