

Explain dangers

Mixing concrete

Cement dust can irritate your skin. The dust reacts with sweat or damp clothing to form a corrosive solution. Cement dust is also dangerous if it gets into your eyes, or if you inhale it.

Working with concrete

Wet concrete or mortar can burn your skin or cause skin ulcers if it falls inside your boots or gloves or soaks through your clothes. Concrete finishers kneeling on fresh concrete have had their knees severely burned.

The burns caused by concrete may be slow. You may not feel anything until several hours later. That's why it's important to wash concrete off your skin right away.

Cement usually contains a metal called hexavalent chromium. This metal causes allergic dermatitis (inflammation of the skin).

Identify controls

Mixing concrete

- Wear an N, R, or P 95 mask when pouring or mixing dry cement.
- Wear eye protection for mixing, pouring, and other work with dry cement.
- Work upwind from cement dust.

Working with concrete

Remove rings and watches because wet concrete can collect underneath and burn your skin.

- Wear alkali-resistant gloves.
- Pull sleeves over gloves.
- Wear coveralls with long sleeves and full-length pants.
- Tuck pants inside boots and duct-tape at the top to keep wet mortar and concrete out.

- Use waterproof boots high enough to keep concrete from flowing over the top.
- Remove any clothing contaminated by wet concrete.
- Don't wash your hands with water from buckets used for cleaning tools.
- When your skin comes in contact with concrete, wash with cold running water as soon as possible. Flush out any open sores or cuts. Get medical attention if your skin still feels like it's burning.
- After working with concrete, always wash your hands before eating, smoking, or using the toilet.

If your eyes are exposed to concrete, rinse with cold tap water for at least 15 minutes. Get medical attention if necessary.

Silica

Beware of silica, an ingredient in concrete.

Repeated exposure to airborne silica can lead to silicosis, a disabling and often fatal lung disease. There may also be a link between silica dust and cancer.

You can inhale silica from cement dust, or from sanding, grinding, or cutting concrete.

- Make sure you have dust control measures in place.
- Where possible, wet-cut rather than dry-cut blocks and other concrete products.
- Wear an N, R, or P 95 mask.
- Wear eye protection.

For more information, refer to the Safety Talk "Silica."

Demonstrate

Ask crew about precautions they take with concrete.