



Concrete work is usually hard physical labor that presents many different hazards for the individuals who work in this field. While there needs to be a steady or even fast pace at times, it is important to take the time to recognize the hazards of the work and mitigate them. Through elimination and communication many of the related hazards to concrete work can be controlled.

Hazards of Concrete Work

- Concrete burns
- Slips, trips, falls
- Caught in or between incidents
- Struck by incidents
- Manual handling injuries

Safe Work Practices

Concrete burns – It is important to protect your skin from concrete. Fresh concrete is abrasive and caustic in nature. It can easily irritate and burn your skin if you do not protect yourself. Wear long pants, a long sleeve shirt, protective gloves, safety glasses and rubber boots. Covering the skin and washing off any concrete that comes into contact with the skin is the best way to protect yourself from concrete burns.

Slips, trips, and falls – Rebar, form work, uneven ground, and tools present many trip hazards in a concrete work area. It is important to keep the area as clear as possible to eliminate tripping hazards. Workers should take note of the work area and watch where they are stepping as they work.

Struck by incidents – There are many hazards to the hands and body from hammers and other tools. It is important to use tools correctly with the proper grip and motion. Swinging a hammer too hard or losing control of it can result in injury to yourself or another worker in the area. Another struck by hazard is the boom from a concrete pump truck or the chute of a concrete truck. Workers should be wearing hard hats when these overhead hazards are present. Utilizing a spotter to communicate with the operator of the equipment and to the workers on the ground is an efficient way to control and communicate the movements of a chute or boom.

Manual handling injuries – There is a lot of physical labor involved in concrete work. Workers need to practice safe lifting techniques or use a buddy system when lifting heavy or awkward objects. When shoveling concrete or dirt it is important to shovel an amount that is comfortable to do repeatedly. Avoid twisting the back when lifting or shoveling to avoid injuring the muscles in the back. Starting the day off with stretching or light physical labor will help prevent injuries due to muscles not being warmed up.

Summary

Concrete work presents a lot of hazards that can be difficult to mitigate against at times. Preplanning and recognizing the hazards will go a long way in preventing injuries. When workers communicate and help each other out while completing the work tasks it makes the environment safer for everyone involved. Before concrete work begins next, look at your work area and the tasks ahead. Work as a team to identify and eliminate as many hazards as possible.

Discussion point:

1. What other hazards are present in concrete work?

