

Environmental, Health and Safety News

February 2015

We're Proud of Our Work

Something to Think About!!

The straight and narrow path might be wider if more people used it!
-- 2015 Farmer's Almanac

Let Safety Reign as King in 2015

**Irving
Materials, Inc.**
Group of Companies

imi
Concrete
We're proud of our work



imi
Aggregates

Every so often we get notified that a customer is having skin discomfort due to exposure to freshly mixed unhardened concrete. It has come up again recently, therefore it is time to review the topic.

What is a cement burn and what can we do to prevent it?

Physicians call cement-related skin problems *contact dermatitis*, of which there are two types: irritant and allergic.

Irritant contact dermatitis - what most people call a cement burn - is a rash caused by skin contact with a chemical or substance that causes direct injury to skin cells. Alkalinity, abrasiveness and the hygroscopic (that means it is able to absorb moisture from the atmosphere or your skin) nature of wet concrete is the cause of irritant contact dermatitis. This skin problem can be prevented by safe work practices and appropriate personal protective equipment.

Allergic contact dermatitis is a rash caused by skin contact with a chemical substance that penetrates the skin and triggers an allergic reaction. It is estimated that 5% to 15% of workers exposed to wet concrete may be sensitive to concrete in a manner where they need to be concerned about an allergic reaction. Allergic contact dermati-

tis is a serious medical problem and is much more difficult to control than irritant dermatitis. About the only solution is for the affected person to change job assignments and to stay away from freshly mixed unhardened concrete.

Under the Hazard Communication Standards we, the producer, have a responsibility to inform not only our employees, but our customers about the hazards associated with handling our products. More importantly, it is the right thing to do. We accomplish this by use of our SDS on freshly mixed unhardened concrete, warnings on our delivery tickets, and word of mouth.

There are bright red warnings on the front of our delivery tickets. Drivers are to make sure that customers are made aware of this warning and to get their signatures on this warning label and where appropriate, provide a warning sheet.

I am not a ready-mix truck driver, but I suspect that those people who need some coaching on the hazardous aspects of concrete handling and finishing are pretty obvious when arriving on the jobsite. When our customer is dressed in flip-flops and shorts, ready to finish and place ready mixed concrete, an inexperienced

Thanks to :

Diane Howell
from Calcium
Products for
the slogan!

We are on the web
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**Safety is never an accident: it is
always the result of high inten-
tion, sincere effort, intelligent di-
rection and skilled execution! It
represents the wise choice of
many alternatives!!**

customer should be expected. Make an extra effort to provide as much information as is possible. Recommend appropriate personal protective equipment to include long sleeved shirts, long pants, boots, gloves, knee pads, and eye protection. Explain that prolonged contact with the product can result in serious skin injury. Warn that soaked clothes should be removed immediately and washed thoroughly prior to reuse. The customer should thoroughly wash skin that was in contact with wet concrete after the job is complete.

The dispatcher or salesman has a part in this warning effort, as well. When the order is taken, the warning information should be passed along and documentation of the effort should be made. Especially with cash customers that are obviously do-it-yourselfers.

If the customer refuses to heed warnings, please let your supervisor or dispatcher know.

I truly believe that communication is the key

Location: _____

Supervisor: _____

please sign below, confirming the material was reviewed: _____ February 2015

to success in this as in most safety issues: management to employee, employee to management; salesman to customer and driver to customer. The success of everything we do depends on you and safety is number one!

I have been told that a mild vinegar solution is a good counter for skin exposure to freshly mixed unhardened concrete. It makes sense, vinegar is an acid and ready mixed concrete is a base. One should neutralize the other. There are commercial products on the market that will do the same thing. But, these are not a cure-all because caustic burns are only one of several causes of concrete dermatitis.

Cement burns are very painful! They can be prevented by using proper personal protective equipment, pass it on.



**Have a Safe and
Healthy February!**