

Environmental, Health and Safety News

June 2013

We're Proud of Our Work

imi
Irving Materials, Inc.

**Our Goal For 2013 Must Be
Safety Records Clean and Incident Free**

SAVING YOUR SKIN

This newsletter is a rerun from a few years ago, but it contains important information for all employees on the ready mixed concrete side as well the customers of our ready mixed concrete.

Portland cement is a generic term used to describe a variety of building materials valued for their strong adhesive properties when mixed with water. Those who work with portland cement are at risk of developing skin problems, ranging from mild and brief to severe and chronic. Wet portland cement can damage the skin because it is caustic, abrasive, and absorbs moisture. Portland cement also contains trace amounts of hexavalent chromium [Cr(VI)], a toxin harmful to the skin. Dry portland cement is less hazardous to the skin because it is not as caustic as wet cement.

Who is at risk

Any individual who has skin contact with wet portland cement has the potential to develop cement-related skin problems. There are many different tasks that involve the use of portland cement.

Skin problems caused by exposure to portland cement

Wet portland cement can cause caustic burns, sometimes referred to as cement burns. Those exposed cannot rely on pain or discomfort to alert them to cement burns because cement burns may not cause immediate pain or discomfort. By the time the individual becomes aware of a cement burn, much damage may have already been done. Cement burns can get worse even after skin contact with cement has ended. Anyone experiencing a cement burn is advised to see a health care professional immediately.

Skin contact with wet portland cement can also cause inflammation of the skin, referred to as dermatitis. Signs and symptoms of dermatitis can include itching, redness, swelling, blisters, scaling, and other changes in the normal condition of the skin. Contact with wet

Something to Think About!!

The only people you should ever want to get "even" with are those who have helped you. -- John Honeyfeld

portland cement can cause a non-allergic form of dermatitis (called irritant contact dermatitis) which is related to the caustic, abrasive, and drying properties of portland cement.

In addition, Cr(VI) can cause an allergic form of dermatitis (allergic contact dermatitis, or ACD) in sensitized individuals who work with wet portland cement. When an individual is sensitized, that person's immune system overreacts to small amounts of Cr(VI), which can lead to severe inflammatory reactions upon subsequent exposures. Sensitization may result from a single Cr(VI) exposure, from repeated exposures over the course of months or years, or it may not occur at all. After an individual becomes sensitized, brief skin contact with very small amounts of Cr(VI) can trigger ACD.

SEE A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL IF YOU WORK WITH WET PORTLAND CEMENT AND HAVE SKIN PROBLEMS!!

Preventing cement-related skin problems

The best way to prevent cement-related skin problems is to minimize skin contact with wet portland cement. Compliance with OSHA's requirements for provision of PPE, washing facilities, hazard communication and safety training, along with the good skin hygiene and work practices listed below, will protect against hazardous contact with wet cement.

Good Practices for Glove Selection and Use

Proper gloves for individuals who may come into contact with wet portland cement are recommended. Butyl or nitrile gloves (rather than cotton or leather gloves) are frequently recommended for caustic materials such as portland cement.

Wash your hands before putting on gloves. Wash your hands every time that you remove your gloves.

Dry your hands with a clean cloth or paper towel before putting on gloves.

Protect your arms and hands by wearing a long sleeve shirt with the sleeves duct-taped to your gloves to pre-

