



Working Safely With Concrete

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The forming, placing and finishing of concrete is basic to the construction industry. It also happens to be dangerous. There are many ways that a person can be injured before concrete is finally functional, so we need to ask questions in several categories. Remember, the ones who recognize the hazards are the ones who can prevent the accidents.

Question: What kinds of personal protection are necessary in working around and with concrete?

1. Shirts, gloves, and boots because exposure of the skin to either wet or dry concrete can cause chemical burns.
2. Goggles or face shields if you are doing chipping, wire brushing, or using rotary or impact tools.
3. Respirators, if you are sandblasting concrete. These should have supplied-air and a hood.

Question: What about safety around reinforcing steel?

1. Anybody working from the steel without the benefit of a scaffold shall wear a safety harness/lanyard properly secured.
2. No worker shall ever work over rebar that is sticking straight up unless the ends are covered to prevent impalement.
3. Never use a single choker to hoist a bundle of rebar. Be sure rigging is done correctly. Use tag line on long bundles.

Question: What are some rules to remember in the actual placement of concrete?

1. Check the framework. Be sure it is supported, braced, and checked during the pour to prevent form failure.
2. It is forbidden to ride the bucket for any reason. Also, workers should stay from under the bucket as much as possible.
3. Use an experienced signalman if the crane operator cannot see the bucket at all times.
4. Concrete buckets shall have a positive safety latch to prevent accidental or premature dumping.
5. Concrete trucks shall have back-up alarms or shall have a competent signalman when backing up.