Concrete Work – Concrete Burns Meeting Kit



WHAT'S AT STAKE

Concrete burns might not sound like a big deal at first, but they can cause serious pain and lasting damage if you're not careful. Wet concrete has harsh chemicals that can burn your skin quickly, and if you don't wash it off right away, it could lead to infections or even long-term problems. Getting burned on the job means time off work, doctor visits, and unnecessary pain. Taking simple steps to protect yourself can keep you safe and help you finish your day without injuries.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Concrete burns are a hidden risk on many job sites, but they can cause serious injuries if you don't protect yourself. Wet concrete is more than just messy – it contains chemicals that are highly alkaline, which means they can burn your skin quickly and deeply. Even if you don't feel pain immediately, damage can be happening under the surface.

- **Chemical Burns → Skin Damage**

Wet concrete is highly alkaline, and if it sits on your skin too long, it can cause burns ranging from redness to deep wounds. Cuts or cracked skin make it even easier for burns to happen.

Did you know? Thousands of workers in the U.S. and Canada suffer chemical burns from concrete every year.

- **Concrete Splash → Eye Injuries**

Splashes from wet concrete or dust can get into your eyes, causing irritation or serious injury. No goggles or face shield? You're risking permanent damage.

- **Delayed Pain and Symptoms → Hidden Danger**

Concrete burns sometimes don't hurt right away because the chemicals numb the skin. This can trick workers into thinking everything is fine. Delaying rinsing or treatment allows the burns to worsen, making recovery longer and more painful.

- **Repeated Exposure → Chronic Skin Issues**

Frequent contact with concrete without proper protection can cause dry, cracked, or inflamed skin. Over time, these chronic issues make your skin more vulnerable to infections and injuries.

- **Clothing Can Trap Chemicals → Increased Risk**

Wet concrete soaking through clothes keeps chemicals pressed against your skin longer. This is why gloves, long sleeves, and waterproof clothing are so important on the job.

Real World Scenario

A worker poured concrete without wearing gloves or long sleeves. He didn't notice the wet concrete soaking through his clothing and burning his arms until the pain became unbearable. He needed medical care and missed weeks of work. This could have been prevented with the right PPE and quick rinsing.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Protecting yourself from concrete burns is all about using the right gear and acting quickly if you get wet concrete on your skin. Here's what you need to do:

Wear Proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Always wear waterproof gloves to keep concrete off your hands.
- Use long-sleeve shirts and pants made of waterproof material.
- Wear safety goggles or a face shield to protect your eyes from splashes.
- Use waterproof boots if you're working in wet concrete areas.

Avoid Skin Contact and Check Often

Keep wet concrete off your skin as much as possible. If you do get concrete on your skin, don't wait to wash it off. Rinse immediately with plenty of clean water—ideally for 20 minutes or more. Remember to check areas like under your gloves and clothing where concrete can sneak in unnoticed.

Handle Concrete Carefully

Take your time when mixing or pouring concrete to avoid splashing. Use tools to handle concrete rather than your hands whenever possible. Position yourself so splashes are less likely to hit your body or face.

Clean Up Quickly

If your clothing gets wet with concrete, change out of it right away. Leaving concrete-soaked clothes on only increases the risk of burns. Also, clean your tools and work area regularly to reduce dust and splashes that can cause injury.

Know the Signs and Act Fast

If you feel numbness, itching, or see redness after contact with concrete, don't ignore it. Rinse the area immediately and tell your supervisor. Early action prevents burns from getting worse and avoids long recovery times.

Bonus Tip: Always have plenty of clean water nearby for quick rinsing. If concrete gets on your skin or in your eyes, flushing it out immediately can prevent serious damage.

FINAL WORD

Concrete burns can happen fast and cause lasting harm if you're not careful. Wearing the right gear and rinsing off wet concrete right away are simple steps that protect your skin and keep you on the job. Don't wait for pain to start—act immediately and stay safe every day.