

CEMENT

IDENTIFY

Portland cement is used in Manitoba everyday. It can hurt you if it comes into contact with your skin or eyes, or is inhaled.

Cement usually contains a metal called hexavalent chromium. This metal causes allergic dermatitis (inflammation of the skin).

There are three types of cement:

- **Dry cement** – when you empty a bag of cement, the dust can irritate your skin. The dust reacts with sweat or damp clothing to form a corrosive solution.

Cement dust can also get in your eyes, causing redness, burns, or blindness.

Inhaling cement dust irritates your nose and throat. It can also cause choking and trouble breathing.

- **Wet cement** – cement is also hazardous when it is wet-in mortar or concrete. If it gets inside your boots or gloves, or soaks through your clothes, it can cause burns and skin ulcers.

The burns caused by cement may be slow. You may not feel anything until several hours later. That's why it's important to wash cement off your skin right away.

- **Silica** – whether cement is wet or dry, you need to be concerned about silica. Repeat exposure to airborne silica can lead to silicosis, a disabling and often fatal lung disease. There may also be a link between silica dust and cancer. Beware that you can inhale silica from cement dust, or from sanding, grinding, or cutting concrete.

COMMUNICATE AND CONTROL

When working with cement, here's what to wear:

- Wear an N95, R95, or P95 mask when cutting, pouring, or mixing dry cement.
- Wear eye protection for cutting, mixing, pouring, and other work with dry cement.
- Wear alkali-resistant gloves.
- Wear coveralls with long sleeves and full-length pants.
- Pull sleeves over gloves.
- When working with wet mortar or concrete, tuck pants inside boots and duct-tape the top.
- Use waterproof boots high enough to keep concrete from flowing over the top.

FACTS AND TIPS

The following are facts and tips to remember when working with cement:

- Work upwind from cement dust.
- Remove rings and watches. Cement dust can collect underneath and burn your skin.
- Remove any clothing contaminated by cement.
- Don't wash your hands with water from buckets used for cleaning tools.
- If your skin comes in contact with cement, wash with cold running water as soon as possible. Flush out any open sores or cuts. Get medical attention if your skin still feels like it's burning.
- After working with cement, always wash your hands before eating, smoking, drinking, or using the toilet.
- Read the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for procedures to follow after eye or skin contact with cement.
- If your eyes are exposed to cement, rinse with cold tap water for at least 15 minutes. Get medical attention if necessary.

THE QUIZ

1. Portland cement is used in Manitoba everyday.

It can hurt you if:

- a) It contacts your skin
- b) If contacts your eyes
- c) It is inhaled
- d) All of the above

2. What are some cement-related hazards?

- a) Allergic dermatitis
- b) Blindness
- c) Sore feet
- d) Trouble breathing
- e) Skin ulcers
- f) Wet clothing
- g) Silicosis
- h) Flying dust
- i) All of the above

3. Cement usually contains a metal called hexavalent chromium:

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

4. Dust reacts with sweat or damp clothing to form a corrosive solution:

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

5. There may also be a link between silica dust and cancer:

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

6. Eye protection is not required for mixing, pouring, and other work with dry cement:

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

7. If your eyes are exposed to cement, rinse with cold tap water for at least 15 minutes:

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

8. Read the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for procedures to follow after eye or skin contact with cement:

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

9. Don't wash your hands with water from buckets used for cleaning tools:

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

10. Whether cement is wet or dry, you don't need to worry about silica:

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

1. D; 2. F; 3. TRUE; 4. TRUE; 5. TRUE; 6. FALSE; 7. TRUE;
8. TRUE; 9. TRUE; 10. FALSE

ANSWERS: