Concrete Burns Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. **The three main skin reactions to concrete are:**
   - Irritation
   - Concrete burns
   - Dermatitis
2. Present in all industries and applications where concrete is being used, some of the most common injuries to workers are related to your largest organ – your skin. Concrete can be highly caustic, resulting in ailments ranging from moderate irritation to the thickening and cracking of the skin or worse, and are associated with long healing times.
3. When cement is dry it contains calcium oxide, which is not particularly dangerous. However, when water is added to cement, calcium hydroxide is formed, which is extremely alkaline with a pH of 12 to 13. Normal human skin has a pH of 5.5; therefore, wet cement can produce alkaline (caustic) skin burns which progress and get worse without more exposure. A worker may have wet concrete on his or her skin for hours without feeling any discomfort; however, the cement is damaging the skin microscopically.

STATS

- 250,000 people working in concrete manufacturing, the safety risks are high when working with this material. From slips, trips, and falls to lockout/tagout issues and more, over 10% of those workers, roughly 28,000, experienced an injury or illness on the job, and 42 died in just one year, according to the (OSHA).
- The BLS reports that lost workdays in the masonry fields are 2.5 times greater and in the concrete fields are seven times greater than the U.S. national average.
- Concrete workers report four times more lost workdays for

skin problems than other construction workers. Consequently, workers suffer reduced earnings, medical bills and, in cases where an allergy is diagnosed, loss of trade while employers must deal with workers’ compensation disability claims and lower productivity.