

CRA MEMBERS MEET NEW CHROMIUM VI DIRECTIVE

Concrete Repair Association (CRA) manufacturing members are currently finalising new formulations for their cement based repair materials in order to meet new restrictions on the amount of water soluble chromium VI allowed in products that contain cement after hydration, such as mortars, grouts, adhesives, etc.

The move follows close liaison with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), the British Cement Association (BCA) and other representative bodies within the construction industry.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (Amended) Regulations 2004 (COSHH) now prohibit the supply or use of cement, or cement based preparations, that have a water soluble chromium VI concentration of more than two parts per million. The legislation has been introduced to help prevent allergic contact dermatitis; a potentially serious condition that can lead to permanent disability and can occur when wet cement containing chromium VI comes into contact with the skin.

CRA manufacturers now have to add a reducing agent to their products to bring chromium VI concentrations down to permitted levels. In addition, they must provide information on safe shelf life, since the reducing agent is only effective for a finite period. It may take time, says the CRA, for all 'undosed' products to work their way through the system. Users are therefore reminded to continue to avoid all skin contact with cement and cement products, by ensuring the use of the correct personal protection equipment at all times. The Association also reminds all users that even cement that is properly dosed with reducing agent continues to have the potential to cause ill-health, due to its irritant effects and highly alkaline nature.

A spokesman for the HSE commented "By the simple step of reducing the levels of chromium VI in cement and cement products, these Regulations should make allergic contact dermatitis, cause by skin contacts with wet cement, a thing of the past. The fact remains, however, that wet cement can still cause serious burns if it comes into contact with the skin. So, whilst this change is good news, it does not mean that cement is now 'safe'. Our message to users is ... treat this material with respect if you value your skin"

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Notes to Editor

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