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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CONCRETE CONTRACTORS

# The VOICE of the Concrete Contractor

MAY 2020



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## Message from the Executive Committee

Bill Bramschreiber, Vice President

No doubt that these are unprecedented, ever-changing times; with much still unknown about how this pandemic will end. We are a medium-sized California general contractor, primarily in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas, and we self-perform our own concrete work. California reacted fairly early and appears to have been able to flatten the curve on the number of cases to stay within the limits of their health care capacity, but at what cost to the economy remains to be seen. Fortunately for contractors here, most construction has been classified as essential. In SoCal none of our projects were required to shut down. In NorCal two projects were shut down for five weeks, as shockingly, luxury condos were not considered essential, but they were allowed to start back up the first week in May.

Policies of social distancing, face coverings, routine cleaning and disinfecting, etc. have produced encouraging results from a confirmed positive cases standpoint for construction. One recent study shows that for 35,000 construction workers in the Bay Area, there have only been 25 positive cases since March 6th. Our company has had one confirmed case, an employee not working from a jobsite, and three confirmed cases from subcontractors, for one of their employees who was active on one of our jobsites at some point.

While actual construction at the jobsites was considered an essential service and could continue, our regional offices did need to be shut down during the state-wide "Safe at Home" order. This necessitated that roughly 150 of us would have to quickly find a way to work from home (WFH) in order to keep our jobsites running and to handle other business functions. One positive to this situation was that we were able to successfully do this. So much so, that WHF will be further developed as an option for many of our employees going forward.

There is a lot of talk that there will need to be a new normal. That until a vaccine is widely available, we can't go back to normal. But maybe a new normal could be better than just going back? As Winston Churchill is often credited with saying (although there is some dispute as to whether he actually did) "Never waste a good crisis." The ability for more employees to be able to productively WFH could be one meaningful benefit to come from these unprecedented times. Obviously, jobsites will still need to be staffed. Grounded assessments will need to be made as to how WFH would work on an individual basis with that person's supervisor. WebEx and Zoom meetings are great, but there is still value in in-person meetings; not sure that there is such a thing as virtual trust. But one of the possibilities for the new normal going forward will be more WFH for many; with hopefully the primary benefit being a better work life rhythm for those employees.

I am a big fan of author and motivational speaker Simon Sinek on leadership and how organizations think, act and communicate. During one of his recent talks, he explained how it is most important to be an optimist during times of crisis, and not to just be positive. He says being positive is often the denial of reality; you are saying that things are good when they are not. Instead, you can be optimistic that the future will be positive; that yes, times are tough now, but that we will get through this together.

Joe Whiteman, ASCC director of safety services, has gathered COVID-19 resources from ASCC members and governmental agencies on protecting your employee's health,

The ASCC Executive Committee has made the tough decision to cancel our 2020  
**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
St. Louis, MO | September 24 – 27, 2020  
More information to follow.

Please join these nine ASCC members who have transitioned, or are in the process of switching their employees from hardhats to helmets. If your company has done so please send a helmet to the office so we may showcase your commitment to safety as our numbers grow. These nine companies represent nearly 3,700 employees.



legal advice on business continuity, workplace regulations, and other vital topics. This information can be found on the ASCC website, under the Safety drop down menu, COVID-19 Resources tab.

Let's all continue to be optimistic and stay safe.

## **Executive Director's Message**

Bev Garnant

The heart of ASCC, or the "Golden Egg" of membership, as some like to call it, is the connectivity between staff and members, and, most impactful, member to member. Fortunately we have numerous ways that continues as we shelter in place: just calling or emailing each other of course, our hotlines when you need the experts, the contractor email forum when you need advice from your peers, MIX Group conference calls or ZOOM meetings, and the many written resources accessible via the website or with a simple ask to a staff member.

During this unusual time, however, it seemed like more was necessary. So, our member services staff, Becky Finch and Jill Zeller, have been tasked with placing a personal call to every delegate member. It seemed more like "the ASCC way" than an email blast. The main purpose is to see how everyone is doing, get a feel for the state of members lives and businesses, and to remind you of our many safety resources, especially the special materials and person to person access regarding construction best practices during the pandemic. Becky and Jill report on the positivity of the vast majority of those they're reaching. If you haven't yet received a call, you will soon. And as always, never hesitate to contact staff if there's any way we can help.

I respect all of you so much for continuing to build while experiencing the many restraints, bizarre conditions and new rules you must deal with every day. You have our support and our admiration and please know we're here for you, always.

## **Concrete Polishing Council**

Shawn Halverson, CPC Council Director

### **Challenges to Overcome, in the Polishing Industry — Reflecting on Negative Talk About the Polishing Business**

Why are we negative or cynical about our jobs, careers? The main thing that helps us grow, eat, and thrive? What makes us negative when we talk about our company or job? How can we get to the next phase in business, in hiring people, in educating others, or bringing young people into a new career if we are so negative?? If negativity feeds our souls, we may not think about how it sounds to the other person when we spill our guts in a simple conversation. Do they think to themselves "This guy's a jerk" if he's always so negative when discussing his livelihood?

So, what is it? Is it the stress of ownership? The stress of payroll? Is it the stress of keeping our teams busy? Having to always be looking for more work?

Construction is not like most businesses. You own an ice cream shop, you sell ice cream, people come into your store wanting some. Or you sell shoes to people who need shoes. Those types of businesses people need (well not ice cream). They do not always need polished concrete. They want it, but not if they hear us talk down about it. Why would someone, a GC, or a developer want us, especially if they hear us being negative about our jobs, companies, and people?

That brings me to my point:

Last September I was grateful for someone pointing that out to me at the conference in Chicago. We were not meaning to be negative; I do not remember what we as a group were even talking about when he came up afterwards and said "Why are you guys in business if you're so negative?" We were just sitting around a board room killing time and chatting. It was just chit chat, but it struck a nerve as he walked in and sat down before our meeting started. After the meeting this gentleman came to me in private and told me he listened to us bicker about the industry; not specifically about polishing, but construction in general. He asked why we say negative things about our jobs.

I thought, uh oh, I know he is going to lay into me about this. But instead we talked for an hour about why and how this comes out. I said, "I think I say things mostly because I'm sarcastic." No chuckle from him, he was serious. He said he hears it a lot in group settings or meeting people for the first time. He has caught himself feeling bad when he realized it once came out of his own mouth.

He is a third generation concrete guy. He works in his family company and realized he is lucky to have had the opportunity to come back to the family business after other jobs, and really appreciates what his father and grandfather have created. This conversation grew to a few others around us. We started asking ourselves why? Why are we negative? Is this bred into us? Has this attitude been learned from previous generations? Is it social media?

Does it feel better to be negative or would it be better to be thankful for all the hard work put into an industry over many generations to make something great and be appreciative for what our forefathers did for us? It's tough out there, but is it worse than years past? Imagine the dangers of working years ago without the safety policies and PPE we use today.

We need to be thankful for how far we have come in concrete and polishing.

Our conclusion of that impromptu meeting was that we all agreed to change our views. We decided to be thankful for our careers whether passed down through generations, or as a new start up.

We have chosen this path, we can change are attitudes toward the positive, encourage young folks into trying a new career without staring at a computer all day, learn a trade and grow to be prosperous. We can share and help others to see the beauty of concrete, the lasting relationships it creates, the structures we will leave behind for generations to see and appreciate.

Should not the shine we create in concrete polishing help us remind us to smile and be appreciative for having a job, career, a team that works hard to provide for their families and ours?

Let's drop the negative talk, let's see those smiles shine like the floor at 1500 grit.Can we do that as an industry? Can we!

***POLISHED CONCRETE MAKES MY SMILE SHINE!***

## ***ASCC Looking for Submittals – Wet Weather Protection Activities***

Bruce Suprenant, Technical Director

Since 1996, ACI 301 “Specifications for Concrete” provided an option in which the specifier could require the contractor to submit a plan for wet-weather protection activities. The specification language for ACI 301-16, 5.1.2 Submittals is shown below. During placement of concrete, unless protection is provided, ACI 301, Section 5.3.2, indicates wet weather considerations include not allowing precipitation to increase mixing water or to damage the concrete surface.

### **ACI 301-16 Specification for Concrete**

#### **5.1.2 Submittals**

**5.1.2.2** If required, submit information specified in 5.1.2.2(a) through 5.1.2.2(g).

**5.1.2.2(c) Wet-weather protection**—Wet-weather protection activities.

#### **5.3.2 Placement of concrete**

##### **5.3.2.1 Weather considerations**

**5.3.2.1(a) Wet weather**—Do not place concrete while rain, sleet, or snow is falling unless protection is provided. Do not allow precipitation to increase mixing water or to damage concrete surface.

This ACI 301 provision continued for more than 20 years in the 1996, 1999, 2005, 2010 and 2016 versions. I am, however, not aware of any concrete contractors that have had to submit a wet weather protection plan. Apparently, the plan would need to include information about wet weather considerations as shown below:

#### **A. Rain, Sleet, Snow**

1. Determining when to place concrete based on weather forecasts.
2. Deciding who can cancel a concrete placement.
3. Acknowledging responsibility if the GC, CM or Owner dictate concrete placement in adverse weather.
4. Having wet weather protection equipment and supplies on site.
5. Deciding when to stop a concrete placement; or stop and restart.
6. Methods to utilize protection equipment when necessary.
7. Consider investigation or repair if necessary.

When developing a wet weather plan for concrete placement, review “Concrete Placements Exposed to Rain” by R. L. Kozikowski, S.M. Tarr, K. Roswell and B.A. Suprenant, *Concrete International*, August 2019.

There might be other wet weather activities, however, that may need to be included, with these considerations:

**Safety:** rain gear, the risk of walking in mud, slipping on wet surfaces including ladders, lightning, and electrical hazards from tools and equipment.

**Work platform:** providing and maintaining a stable ground platform for increased productivity, with the use of continuous grading, pumping water, or using gravel or cement-treated base to stabilize ground.

**Tracking onto roadways:** provide stabilized entrances and exits, tire washes, and use track-out mats.

ASCC is looking into what might be a wet-weather protection plan and how it can best be used by concrete contractors. If you have a wet-weather plan and are willing to share please email [bsuprenant@ascconline.org](mailto:bsuprenant@ascconline.org) or call at 800-331-0668.

## Safety & Risk Management Council

Jason Anglin, Safety & Risk Management Council

One of the basic principles of any safety program is to control risk exposure for our workforce and projects. By limiting operational risk we help reduce the potential for injury and incidents and decrease the level of severity when such events occur.

A tool that is often underutilized for risk control is the simple phone camera. By taking pictures regularly, a company can photo-document conditions and create reference material to help aid incident investigations or support claims when a dispute occurs.

In recent months, as projects began to slow or stop due to safety concerns from COVID-19, our project teams were instructed to take extensive photos of site conditions. Project teams were instructed to photo-document tools, equipment and site conditions.

As we've returned to projects, having good reference photos has enabled us to better assess changes in site conditions, such as excavations and ground conditions that pose a potential safety risk. By having reference photos we are able to identify potential safety and cost issues, discuss a resolution with clientele, and avoid risking a dispute.

Additionally, reference photos become very useful if a project site experiences criminal activity such as vandalism or theft. Photos have been used to help substantiate insurance claims after a significant theft. Photos have been used to determine loss amounts and help aid the police during criminal investigations.

Another great benefit of continually taking project photos is the ability to use them to positively promote safety and your organization. The majority of photos taken on a job site should be taken to document the task and accomplishments our project teams succeed in doing on a daily basis. The photos we take today often become testimonials to the people who work with us.

## Safety & Risk Management Council

Joe Whiteman, Director of Safety Services

### Join Our ASCC COVID-19 Roundtable Calls; a Weekly Forum to Share Challenges and Resources

During this pandemic, contractors across the country are faced with many challenges related to operating under federal, state and local guidelines pertaining to COVID-19. Last month we highlighted the COVID-19 resource page on the ASCC website. That page contains tools, guides, trainings and links to other helpful sites, and is updated regularly to ensure our members are provided the latest information available.

This month I would like to highlight the Safety & Risk Management Council's weekly COVID-19 roundtable. This has proven to be a valuable resource for those that participate. Any member interested is welcome to join. The more participants, the more information, challenges and best practices that are shared. These calls bring together valuable ideas, discussions, and resources from participating members.

The one-hour call, every Thursday at 1 p.m. central time, provides participants an excellent opportunity to network with other members who may have already experienced a challenge that you are facing, and are able to share lessons learned. That is one of the great benefits as a member of ASCC, utilizing each other in a time of need. If anyone would like to join this group, please reach out to Joseph Whiteman, ASCC director of safety services, at [jwhiteman@asconline.org](mailto:jwhiteman@asconline.org) or through the safety hotline at (833) 281-9602.



Ceco Concrete Construction, headquartered in Kansas City, MO, held a safety stand down last month to review JHAs and discuss other safety issues relating to new jobsite safety rules to deal with the pandemic.

## HOT LINE QUESTIONS

### CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION

**800-331-0668**

Bruce Suprenant  
[ascchotline@asconline.org](mailto:ascchotline@asconline.org)

### POLISHED CONCRETE

**844-923-4678**

Chris Sullivan  
[csullivan@asconline.org](mailto:csullivan@asconline.org)

### SAFETY & INSURANCE

**833-281-9602**

Joseph Whiteman  
[jwhiteman@asconline.org](mailto:jwhiteman@asconline.org)

### DECORATIVE CONCRETE

**888-483-5288**

Chris Sullivan  
[csullivan@asconline.org](mailto:csullivan@asconline.org)

ASCC members have access to these toll-free numbers for assistance.

### Webinars begin at 3:00 p.m. CST

June 17, 2020	Contradictions in Polishing Specifications	Clark Branum, Diamatic USA
July 8, 2020	Decorative Concrete Applications and Finishes	Chris Sullivan, ASCC Decorative Concrete Specialist

Members no charge. Non-members \$35; MC, Visa, Amex only. Call 866-788-2722 to register.