



CPG Tools for Success

Tips for Successful Decorative Concrete Exterior Pavement/Flatwork

Resources:

- American Society Concrete Contractors (ASCC), Decorative Concrete Resources & Technical Documents, <https://ascconline.org/Decorative-Concrete/Technical>
- American Society Concrete Contractors (ASCC), Polished Concrete Technical Documents, <https://ascconline.org/Polishing/Technical>
- American Concrete Institute (ACI), ACI/ASCC PRC-310-25: Decorative Concrete—Guide https://www.concrete.org/store/productdetail.aspx?ItemID=31025&Language=English&Units=US_AND_METRIC

Observation: Decorative concrete is traditional concrete combined with art, with an emphasis on aesthetics. Art is subjective. Communication and setting expectations are critical for decorative concrete projects.

Mockups are Critical:

- Establish, color, design, placement near where the finished product will be located.
- All parties approve the mockup.
- Manage color expectations.

Mix Design Adjustments:

- Optimizing the mix design, including aggregate selection/gradation and water-cementitious ratio affect placement and final aesthetics. Contractors and ready-mix producers work together for desired results.
- Admixtures, such as accelerators or water reducers, can be used to improve the performance of concrete, such as accelerating strength gain and reducing water demand.
- Integral color can change slightly from truck to truck, day to day, etc. Color is highly susceptible to changes in reduced water or increased water in the mix design.

Proper Curing Practices:

- Adequate curing is crucial for minimizing cracking and maximizing strength.
- Curing on decorative concrete has an impact on color, texture, etc.
- Curing product selection and sealer product selection must be compatible.

Pay Attention to Weather Conditions:

- Humidity and wind play a significant factor in plastic shrinkage potential and dry-out.

Proper Finishing Techniques:

- Experienced contractors can adapt their finishing techniques to address the unique characteristics of concrete, such as using tools and techniques that minimize crusting and optimize the final surface appearance.

Proper Sealing Practices:

- Sealing is critical for decorative projects. Use compatible curing and sealing products. Set owner expectations on maintenance and reapplying sealers, etc.

Testing and Evaluation:

- Thorough testing and evaluation of concrete mixes are recommended to ensure that they meet the specific requirements of each project and to identify any potential performance issues.

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