

# SCHOOLS 2 SKILLS

## CONCRETER—CAREER OVERVIEW

Concrete is one of the most durable materials used in construction. Once set, concrete – a mixture of Portland cement, sand, gravel and water – becomes the foundation for everything from decorative patios and floors to huge dams or kilometres of roadway. Concrete workers place, spread, compact, finish and cure concrete for buildings, roads, tunnels, bridges and marine structures, using hand tools, vibrators, pumps, trowelling machinery and other power tools. They may specialise as concrete finishers on concrete footings and slabs and may also work in tilt-up construction, which involves laying concrete and finishing it on site. There is a growing industry in pre-cast concrete where concrete elements are cast and cured in factories and then transported to site for erection.

### What might a concreter's working day look like?

Each day can be different depending on the job, and you may be involved in:

- + Mixing cement, gravel, sand and water to make concrete on site
- + Moving pre-mixed concrete into position using concrete pumps
- + Spreading and levelling concrete into formwork
- + Using trowelling machines to float, trowel and polish concrete surfaces

### As a concreter you must be able to:

- + Read plans and calculate quantities
- + Create different surface textures by tamping, smoothing and shaping the concrete surface with a variety of hand tools
- + Cut joints into hardened concrete
- + Mix and apply pigments when a coloured surface is required
- + Dig foundation trenches if working on residential or small commercial projects
- + Use vibrators to compact cement in formwork
- + Contribute to safe tilt-up construction

### To be a successful concreter you should:

- + Have a careful, methodical and accurate approach to work
- + Have the ability to solve problems
- + Enjoy doing a practical job
- + Be aware of safety issues, particularly working at heights and on construction sites
- + Have the ability to work as part of a team
- + Be physically fit and enjoy working outdoors

### Where does a concreter work?

Usually outside in the fresh air, travelling between sites once each job is complete. You could be working on new residential, commercial and industrial developments, civil construction sites, or local Government works.

### What can the future hold?

If you're ambitious and willing to work hard, there are no limits to where a career as a concreter can take you. With further study and training you can take the next step into civil engineering, work as a sub-contractor or even start your own company. Many business owners, supervisors and senior managers in the construction industry started their careers as tradespeople.

### Fantastic! How do I get started?

To become a concreter it's a good idea to complete an **apprenticeship**. For further information about gaining a concreting apprenticeship, search Apprenticentre or call 13 19 54

#### SKILLS FROM SCHOOLS

