



10 Easy Steps to Pouring Your Own Concrete Project

- 1. Plan Ahead:** Stake out your project area -- remove grass, tree roots and other debris. Check the grade to ensure proper drainage. Use graph paper to sketch out your project, using the one square equals one foot approach.
- 2. Form the Area:** The most common forming materials are either 2x4s or 2x6s, placed on the edges surrounding the area to be poured. (In general, concrete should not be poured less thick than the width of a 2x4.) Use stakes on the outside of the form to hold it in place. Note: Stakes must not extend above the form or they will interfere with the "screeding" process (see #6). Check the grade of the area by moving the screed board across the forms, measuring the distance from the board to the grade of the area.
- 3. Determine the Quantity:** Concrete is sold by the cubic yard. A cubic yard is the amount of concrete required to fill a 3x3x3 box (or 27 cubic feet). Calculate the quantity of concrete you need to order, adding 5-10% to allow for spillage, uneven grade, etc.:

Thickness of Concrete:	3"	4"	5"	6"
Sq. Ft. Covered by 1 cu. yd.	108	81	64	54

Or, All County Mobile Concrete will be happy to help you calculate the amount of concrete your project requires. Just call us with the dimensions of your project area, including the thickness. Note: To determine the square feet of surface area, multiply length in feet by width in feet. Example: An 8'x10' patio = 80 sq ft.

- 4. Gather Tools:** Gather the tools you will need, including: edger, floats/bull float, trowel, shovel, level, pry bar, safety glasses and a tape measure.
- 5. Get the Concrete:** Once you know the quantity of concrete your project requires, contact All County Mobile Concrete to schedule a delivery. Our mobile units will mix the exact amount of concrete you need right at your job site and you pay for only the amount you use. Our on-site mixed concrete is always fresh and always of the highest quality.
- 6. Place the Concrete:** Place the concrete in the forms either directly from the truck or from a wheelbarrow. Then use a 2x4 board to "screed" the concrete. Screeding is accomplished by using a sawing action on the screed board as it rests upon the forms. Be sure to screed in the direction of the pour.
- 7. Float the Concrete:** This process involves working the surface of the concrete with a wood or metal "float" to smooth out irregularities left by the screeding process. It is important not to *overwork* the concrete during while floating. Use the minimum floating possible and pay particular attention to edges such as concrete poured against a foundation.
- 8. Edge the Concrete:** An edging tool is a small trowel with a rounded edge. It is used to give the concrete a small radius on the outside edge for a professional look. Do this step early so any interfering stones can be pushed into the concrete.

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9. **Final Finish:** Allow any water that bleeds to the surface to evaporate before beginning the final finishing process. Once the water has evaporated, it is time to steel trowel the surface. Note: A very smooth steel troweled surface is usually desirable only on garage and basement floors. For outside surfaces such as patios, sidewalks and driveways, a light broom finish is recommended -- after lightly steel troweling, pull a soft bristle push broom in a straight line across the concrete surface.
10. **Cure the Concrete:** Concrete reaches its maximum strength gradually. In seven days, it will be approximately 1/2 to 2/3 of the strength it will be in 28 days. To reach full strength, the concrete must be kept moist for five-to-seven days. This is especially important in very hot weather. Note: During the first few days of curing, concrete is very fragile. Leave the forms on for three days in hot weather and longer in cool weather. (Cool weather extends concrete curing time.) Apply a good concrete sealer a few hours after finishing to help keep the concrete moist and prevent it from drying out.

The process of "setting up" is a chemical reaction, not a "drying out" of the mixture. Water is one of the chemical ingredients in the reaction. This is the reason it is so important to "cure" the concrete by keeping it moist. Without water, the reaction stops and the concrete weakens. Improperly cured concrete has poor strength at the surface which leads to scaling, peeling, dusting, etc.

The use of de-icing salts should be avoided on concrete. This is especially true for the first winter of newly placed concrete. Remember that your automobile will deposit salt picked up from the highways on your driveway -- this should be avoided during the first winter following your concrete project.

WARNING: Some people experience a severe reaction to concrete. Never go barefoot in concrete. Always wear rubber boots and gloves when working with concrete. Thoroughly wash off with clean water any concrete that contacts skin or eyes.



*P.O. Box 661
Yonkers, NY 10703*

*Ph: 914-423-1035 / Fax: 914-423-1036
www.allcountymobileconcrete.com
acmconcrete@optonline.net*