

Tips on Curing Concrete

To cure concrete is to preserve the concrete through the process of hydration. This process increases the strength and durability of a concrete slab. Hydration sets up a chemical reaction between the cement mixture and water, thus causing the concrete to harden.

Proper Curing

A) Begin to cure concrete once the cement mixture has been poured into the form you are using. Whether you are pouring a slab for a foundation, a driveway, a concrete deck around a swimming pool or any other form, the process is the same. Finish the concrete to prepare it for curing by raking it out level. Leveling works the rocks in the cement mixture down to the bottom and brings the actual cement mixture up. Water will form on top, but this water evaporates quickly. You must keep the concrete moist to allow the concrete time to harden and set.

B) Keep the concrete moist by using any of several methods. Water hoses and sprinklers can be used to keep a light mist falling on the concrete. Buckets of water can be poured over the concrete. You can dip big brooms into the buckets of water and sprinkle water over the concrete. This watering of the concrete is the hydration process that must be used when you want to cure concrete. The final quality of the concrete will be determined by how well it is cured during hydration.

C) Retain moisture on the concrete with some kind of covering on top of the concrete. Any material such as burlap, canvas, straw or sand can be used to cover the poured concrete. Keep it damp while you are waiting for the concrete to cure.

D) Pay attention to the color of the concrete as it hardens. You can usually tell when concrete has cured by the way its color lightens.

Tips & Warnings

Curing concrete can take anywhere from several hours to seven days, depending on the size and type of form you are pouring. Weather also plays a factor. The colder the temperature, the longer it takes to cure concrete.