

Guideline for Raw Material Sampling on MTO Contracts

Given the safety challenges that COVID-19 has added to our daily activities, we have had to modify to how we approach routine tasks and adjust regular business practices accordingly. As companies try to limit the number of outside personnel entering their facilities, sampling procedures must be adjusted to account for company specific and government health and safety measures. MTO contracts have some of the most stringent sampling and testing qualifications, that are strictly enforced on all MTO projects. For these projects to continue during COVID-19 the MTO insists on obtaining raw material samples as per the existing contracts.

Since most concrete plants are considered “closed facilities” to non-essential work and external visitors, to minimize the potential for COVID-19 exposure, the MTO has developed the attached document. The **Material Sampling COVID-19 Guideline** outlines new criteria for obtaining samples while observing industry specific public health measures. As Ontario’s declaration of emergency has been extended to June 2, 2020, the concrete industry continues to work with the MTO to ensure they are able to provide the required raw material samples, while prioritizing everyone’s health and safety.



MTO contracts remain one of the only construction contracts that have drastic raw material penalties, in addition to significant final product penalties. This new process may place additional strain on our raw materials suppliers, but we must work together to increase awareness and mitigate the potential of any financial damages. We encourage all members to review these protocols with their suppliers to determine the best way to ensure that samples are properly obtained, and that these additional sampling challenges do not result in unwarranted financial risks.

The critical factors that all members should consider when reviewing the revised procedures are:

- There will be no surprise inspections. All inspections must be scheduled with the concrete producer, who will coordinate with their supplier to determine who will be conducting the sampling and the procedures that will be followed.
- The person conducting the sampling must meet the necessary qualifications and consider any challenges that should be addressed prior to the sampling. There is a potential for field testing certifications to lapse, as CCIL and ACI examinations cannot currently take place under Ontario’s emergency orders. While Concrete Ontario’s position is that no certification should be considered expired until we are able to start conducting recertifications, the MTO has not clarified their position on this issue. If this is a potential issue, please raise it with the CA prior to sampling.
- Sampling will be conducted by the person appointed by the concrete producer. The producer has a responsibility to their employees to minimize exposure at the concrete plant and to operate safely, therefore they will be responsible for selecting and screening the person conducting the sampling.
- External sample containers will not be accepted. To mitigate COVID-19 exposure and to avoid the need to decontaminate external sample containers, the concrete producer will supply their own sample containers. Please ensure that you have sufficient and appropriate containers for aggregates, admixtures, and cement prior to the sampling.
- MTO inspectors will witness the testing from a safe distance. For exterior testing, it is recommended

that they remain in their vehicles and observe the testing through the window. Where samples must be obtained from inside a building, a video link using systems such as FaceTime will be established between the sampler and the inspector. Technology issues should be discussed prior to the inspection.

Concrete Ontario continues to work with our members to share industry best practices and to address new challenges, as we all work to create safety protocols that ensure we are able to comply with strict public health measures and operate safely during COVID-19.

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