

Coast Mountain Bus Company adopted a concrete grooving system that protects workers from falls around service pits.



Non-skid surface protects workers from falls

By Jamie Bonham

Coast Mount Bus Company (CMBC) corporate safety officers found a solution to a safety problem with the company's bus service pits that was absolutely groovy; grooved concrete to be exact. Larry Spouler, CMBC safety officer, discovered a concrete grooving system that has brought a long-term solution to a problem that has been both a safety issue and an economic nuisance.

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation stipulates that all service pits without railings must be surrounded by a one-metre-wide non-skid surface.

Previously, the company had been using topical treatments that adhered to the concrete around the metre-deep pits to create a non-skid surface for workers. The problem was that topical applications could not withstand the daily abuse they received and would quickly wear away. According to Spouler, due to the wear and tear from heavy buses, oil, grease, and pressure washing, "inside of a month or two you've already blown away most of your expensive topical coating. At our

Richmond site, which is a brand new facility, the topical application had already worn away within a year."

Once the topical coating begins to break down, the surface loses its non-skid characteristics and has to be replaced before it becomes a safety hazard. After searching around for a solution that would eliminate the need for constant maintenance, while also ensuring proper safety, they happened upon a concrete grooving process patented by a company called Source Floor Specialties. The treatment involves mechanically etching the surface of the concrete with circular patterns that result in a non-skid surface. The surface treatment is permanent and actually improves with daily washing.

Coast Mountain Bus tested the treatment at its Surrey depot, and managers and workers alike were impressed with the results. "After that we were sold," says Spouler. "Other solutions out there that didn't have astronomical costs associated with them required either extensive maintenance or supervision, both of

which can go awry. The grooving treatment was once and once only, then you're done — problem solved."

Bob MacInnes, maintenance manager at the Richmond facility, echoes those sentiments, saying that other solutions such as rails and nets "would have gotten in the way of workers' mobility. The concrete grooving has been in place for almost a year and a half now and there have been no problems at all."

Coast Mountain Bus has utilized the concrete grooving process at all of their depots and feedback from workers has been positive. The process was "perfect for what we needed," says Spouler, noting that the surface-etching technique could be beneficial to facilities with similar non-slip requirements, such as hospitals, restaurants, swimming pools, and loading docks.

By proactively searching for a solution the company has been able to increase worker safety while also achieving savings in the long-term.

