Social performance

Cement plants are mainly located in rural areas and are often the central focus for local employment and substantial contributors to local economies and community life. Local cement plants maintain good relationships with their neighbours using a broad range of communications tools including newsletters, liaison meetings, open days and site visits.

Product innovation and quality

The industry’s work is supported by MPA Cement’s technical experts who:

- Develop standards relating to cement, concrete and engineering construction
- Collaborate on research into low carbon cements, concrete performance and durability
- Address specific issues relating to cement use
- Provide authoritative guidance to MPA Cement members and the construction industry

How cement is used

The Mineral Products Association is the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, dimension stone, lime, mortar and silica sand industries.

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A vital industry

MPA Cement represents UK cement industry manufacturers and is part of the Minerals Products Association, the trade body that represents aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, dimension stone, lime, mortar and silica sand industries.

There are four member companies within MPA Cement: CEMEX UK, Hanson Cement, Hope Construction Materials and Lafarge Tarmac. Between them they have the capacity to supply about 12 million tonnes of cement a year; virtually all of the product is sold in the UK, currently representing around 87% of the market.

Cement is a binder that can bond building materials such as bricks and blocks. It also bonds aggregates to form concrete – the most consumed man-made material in the world. Concrete is essential to our economic and social development. Our homes, schools, hospitals, vital national infrastructure such as roads, railways, flood defences and much more all depend on it. Cement is made by, first, heating a mixture of limestone or chalk with shale or clay to very high temperatures to create, mainly, calcium silicates. The raw product, clinker, is then ground with gypsum to a very fine powder to form the grey powder we all know as cement.

Key facts

- The cement industry has an annual turnover of around £800 million
- 11 manufacturing plants, two grinding/blending plants, and seven blending only plants
- Around 2,500 people employed directly, supporting 15,000 indirectly
- A typical cement plant contributes about £15 million a year to the local economy. It is a crucial supplier to the £120 billion construction industry which employs over 2.5 million people.

Sustainability

The cement sector has been a pioneer in the incorporation of sustainable development principles within its activities for over a decade. Since 2004, MPA Cement has proactively reported publically on its performance against a wide range of environmental targets. In 2012, it went a step further and published its first full Sustainable Development report.

In January 2009, the UK cement industry – as part of the MPA and with major companies and other trade associations in the concrete industry – signed up to an overarching Sustainable Construction Strategy, taking a leading role in sustainable construction. This included a commitment for the whole industry to report annually on its sustainability performance.

Health and Safety

The industry has operated a health and safety zero lost time injuries policy since 2006. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of lost time injury incidents from 64 in 2006 to 10 in 2013. The industry will continue to work on eliminating lost time injuries to both its own staff and contractors.

Environmental performance

Cement manufacturing is an energy-intensive process with associated emissions to air. However, the industry strives to continually improve its performance and has achieved significant results since 1998:

- Oxides of nitrogen down by 58%
- Sulfur dioxide down by 80%
- Dust down by 80%

All of these achievements have been made by major investments in new plant and technology and the use of waste fuels and raw materials:

- 1.4 million tonnes of waste and by-products were used as fuels and raw materials in 2012 which makes it a significant net consumer of waste when measured against the less than 5,000 tonnes of waste generated for disposal
- The industry currently replaces over 40% of virgin fossil fuels with waste-derived material and the industry aims to increase this to 65% by 2020.

The industry continues to work to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and in 2012, CO₂ emissions were 21% lower than in 1998. In 2013, looking forward, MPA Cement became the first trade body in the world to publish a 2050 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy which could see the industry reduce its greenhouse gas footprint by 81% over the Kyoto Protocol baseline year of 1990.