What to Check Before Your Ready Mix Concrete Arrives

Getting Ready for a Smooth Pour

Ordering ready mix concrete for a project is a straightforward process, but the success of the pour depends heavily on what happens before the truck arrives. A little upfront planning can prevent delays, extra costs, and a finished slab that doesn't meet expectations. This article walks through the key points to check so your pour goes as smoothly as possible.

Site Access and Vehicle Clearance

The first thing to consider is whether the delivery truck can reach the pour area. Ready mix concrete trucks are large and heavy, and they need a clear path to the site. Check the width of any gates, the height of any overhead obstacles like tree branches or power lines, and the weight capacity of any driveways or paths the truck will cross. If the truck cannot get close enough, you may need to arrange a pump or wheelbarrow the concrete from a drop point. It is much better to know this before the concrete is on its way.

For many projects, the truck can chute the concrete directly into the formwork. But if the pour area is more than a few metres from where the truck can park, you will need a plan. Wheelbarrow access is a practical solution for smaller jobs, but it requires a firm, level path and enough helpers to move the concrete before it begins to set. For larger pours or tighter spaces, a concrete pump may be the answer. Both options add time and cost, so factor them into your budget and schedule.

Order Volume and Grade

Getting the volume right is essential. Order too little and you will be short at the end of the pour; order too much and you will have leftover concrete to deal with. Calculate the volume of your project carefully. For a simple slab, multiply the length, width, and depth. For footings or irregular shapes, break them into rectangles and add them up. It is wise to add a small margin for spillage or uneven ground, but do not over-order significantly. You can discuss the exact volume with your supplier when you place the order.

View the location on Google Maps

The grade of concrete matters just as much. Different projects need different strengths. A garden path might be fine with a C10 mix, while a garage base or a driveway will need something stronger, like C30 or C40. Your supplier can advise on the right grade for your job.

Make sure you specify the correct grade when ordering and confirm it on the delivery ticket. Using the wrong mix can lead to cracking, poor durability, or even structural failure.



Timing and Delivery Window

Ready mix concrete has a limited working time once it is mixed. Most loads need to be placed within about two hours of batching, depending on the weather and the mix design. Plan your pour so that you have all the formwork, reinforcement, and any other prep work finished before the truck arrives. You do not want a full load of concrete sitting while you scramble to finish the last bits of shuttering.

Arrange a delivery time that gives you enough of a window to place and finish the concrete. If you are pouring a large area, you may need multiple loads. Talk to your supplier about the spacing between loads so that the concrete does not start to set before the next truck arrives. On busy days, delays can happen, so have a contingency for holding the concrete if the truck is early or late.

Weather and Temperature

Concrete behaves differently in hot, cold, rainy, or windy conditions. In hot weather, the mix can dry out and stiffen faster, making it harder to place and finish. In cold weather, the hydration reaction slows down, which means the concrete takes longer to gain strength and can be damaged by frost. Rain can wash the cement from the surface, and strong wind can speed up evaporation, leading to surface cracks.

Check the forecast for your pour day. If temperatures are extreme, your supplier may recommend a different mix, such as one with retarder for hot weather or accelerant for cold weather. Have tarps or plastic sheeting ready to cover the concrete if rain is likely. For cold weather, you may need to insulate the slab or use heated water in the mix. A good supplier will help you adjust the order to suit the conditions.

Traffic Management and Parking

If your site is on a busy road or a tight residential street, you need a plan for the delivery truck. Let the driver know where to park and how to approach the site. If possible, have someone guide the truck in. Clear any vehicles, bins, or other obstacles from the path. For larger projects, a traffic management plan might be required, especially if the truck will block the road during the pour. Check with your local council if you think you might need a permit.

It is also worth thinking about the truck's turning circle. A concrete mixer has a large turning radius and may need to reverse into position. If the site access is tight, consider having a spotter to help the driver. A little coordination here can prevent a lot of stress on the day.



Preparation of the Pour Area

The ground where the concrete will go must be ready. This means the formwork is in place and level, the sub-base is compacted and at the right depth, and any reinforcement steel is positioned correctly. Check that the formwork is strong enough to hold the weight of the concrete without bulging or moving. If the ground is soft, the concrete can sink or crack. If the sub-base is uneven, the finished slab will be too. Take the time to get this right before the truck arrives.

You also need a way to handle the concrete once it is poured. Have your tools ready: a rake or shovel for spreading, a straightedge or screed board for levelling, and a float or trowel for finishing. For larger slabs, a power float or a bull float can save a lot of manual work. Make sure you have enough people on hand to place and finish the concrete before it starts to set.

Communication with Your Supplier

Good communication with your concrete supplier is the backbone of a smooth pour. When you order, tell them the exact delivery address, the access conditions, and the time you need the

concrete. Confirm the grade, volume, and any admixtures. On the day of the pour, be available by phone in case the driver needs directions or there is a change in schedule.

Stacey Concrete Ltd is also on Facebook.

One supplier that serves the East Midlands area is Stacey Concrete Ltd, based at Ryder Point Works, Wirksworth, Matlock DE4 4HE, UK, reachable at +44 1629 825188. They supply ready-mix concrete grades C10, C30, C40 and more with delivery across the region. Stacey Concrete Ltd can help you with the right mix for your project and advise on any site-specific concerns.

Final Checks Before the Truck Arrives

Do a last walk-around of the site. Make sure all tools are clean and ready, the formwork is secure, and the access path is clear. Check that you have a water supply if you need to moisten the sub-base or clean tools. Confirm that the concrete will be placed within the working time. If you are using a pump, make sure it is set up and tested. If you are wheelbarrowing, have the route clear and the wheelbarrows ready.



Once the concrete arrives, the driver will need to position the truck and chute the concrete into the forms. Be ready to start placing immediately. Do not let the concrete sit in the truck while

you finish last-minute prep. With all the checks done beforehand, you can focus on getting the concrete placed well and finishing it to a good standard.

A smooth pour is about preparation, not luck. By taking the time to check site access, order the right volume and grade, plan for the weather, and communicate clearly with your supplier, you set yourself up for a successful project. The concrete delivery is just one part of the process, but getting it right makes all the difference.