

FWS: “Slipform” Construction Changing Skylines



FWS Group of Companies (FWS) has been responsible for changing the skyline in Western Canada for over 30 years. They used a technique called “Slipform” construction.

“Slipform” in its vertical usage, is used to build high-rise structures, such as- skyscrapers, cement plants, nuclear reactors, coal preparation plants, stacks, towers, and bridge columns. In this instance FWS used this technique to build a grain elevator.

The slipforms are continuously raised as the concrete fills the forms, starting at the bottom and only stopping movement when they reach the top. Typically, there is one concrete pump and a spare in case of emergencies on site. There is also a crane, which lifts rebar and supplies up to the slipform level that is being worked on.

This technique of construction has numerous benefits that includes- non-stop method of construction, increased rate of construction, increased productivity, provides more working space, creates safe work environment for the workers, employs less accessory equipment, increases flexibility in construction, reduces labor costs, use of scaffolding and temporary workers is reduced, and uniform wall sections and layouts are obtained.

Depending on the height of the vertical building, using the “Slipform” technique, usually means the building can be completed in seven days reaching heights over 130’. Now this is not a normal seven days, because crews work around the clock, 24/7.

Each slipform is a continuous pour with the forms constantly moving as they are raised using hydraulic jacks. This is why it is possible for FWS to construct the concrete silos for a grain elevator in only seven days. A slip usually takes months of planning and includes- procurement, project management, planning, engineering & drafting, field operations, and various subtrades. Plus, excellent coordination and organization must be in place as, supplies, equipment and labour must be on site, organized and continuously operating without any stops in the pour.

The outside of the slip is finished using a hanging scaffold system where workers finish the exterior of the concrete bins while the silo is still being poured. This makes the finishing as efficient as possible.

The next time that you drive past a grain elevator, take a good long look and remember that **FWS is changing skylines with innovation, creativity, and professionalism.**

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