

# What Is the Value of Your Service?

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Daily-operated concrete pumps are the most cost-effective way to place concrete for most applications. The time savings, labor savings, increased quality and improved safety are more valuable than the cost of a daily-operated concrete pump.

From the smallest pours to the largest mats, contractors who rent operated pumps improve their bottom lines. There really is no practical alternative for the modern concrete pump. Today's pumps place almost any type of mix at rates higher than contractors can handle. Crane and buckets, buggies, and even direct dumping are more expensive than pumped concrete.

For the purpose of this article, let's travel into the future and pretend an artificial intelligence crane network called CraneNet, (like Skynet from the Terminator movies) has taken control of all the concrete pumps in North America. They are going to hold the construction industry hostage and not allow any concrete pumps to be used for the foreseeable future.

We will explore the ramifications of this treacherous deed. How will your customers place their concrete? What will it cost them? What will be the impact to schedules?

## RESIDENTIAL POURS

Approximately 40 percent of all pumped concrete takes place on residential projects. Whether the pour is a slab on grade, poured wall footing or foundation, or even a patio, many of these pours are completed with 30-meter class booms. With no pumps available (thanks to CraneNet), your customer will most likely need to rent a 75- to 80-ton crane to reach at least 100 feet and handle a one-yard (4,000-pound) bucket. According to nationwide experts, the average cost for this size crane is \$240 per hour on the job, plus travel each way.

We would estimate the crane would be able to swing a bucket 20 times per hour, or 20-yards per hour. Most residential pours, excluding footings, average 50 to 70 yards. Taking these numbers into consideration, the cost of the crane to place 60 yards of concrete is approximately \$20 per cubic yard.

1 hour mobilization	\$240.00
3 hours of placing concrete	720.00
1 hour mobilization	240.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1,200.00</b>



Previous ACPA benchmark surveys indicate that typical residential pours are being placed by concrete pumps for less than \$15 per cubic yard. The only viable alternative to an operated concrete pump is 25 percent more per pour. In addition, the pour completed with the crane will likely take an additional hour, adding to the overall expense of the pour.

## AVERAGE COMMERCIAL POUR (250 YARDS)

Concrete pumpers often find themselves pumping large slabs on grade (10,000 square feet), tilt ups and elevated decks, which typically require 46-meter or similar size booms. Without concrete pumps available, contractors would be forced to use our competitor's CraneNet 180-ton crane. This crane can place a two-yard (8,000-pound) bucket at 125 feet. At best it can make 12 swings per hour, or 24 yards per hour. A nationwide average cost for this size crane is \$435 per hour, plus travel each way. If the pour is 250 cubic yards, the cost for the crane to place the concrete is \$27.35 per cubic yard.

1 hour mobilization	\$435.00
10.5 hours of placing concrete	4,567.50
1 counter weight truck	1,400.00
1 hour mobilization	435.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$6,837.50</b>

By utilizing a 46-meter or comparable pump, along with an ACPA Certified Operator for \$175 per hour and \$3 per yard plus travel, the cost for your concrete pump is \$8.28 per yard.

1 hour mobilization	\$175.00
1 hour setup	175.00
4.25 hours placing concrete	743.75
\$3 per yard x 250	750.00
Prime charge	50.00
1 hour clean up	175.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$2,068.75</b>

CraneNet just cost your customer \$4,786.25, or 70 percent more to place his slab. And the labor saving on larger pours is even more significant. An entire crew on the slab for six hours less is invaluable for most contractors.

### LARGE CONCRETE POUR (500 YARDS)

While not an everyday occurrence for most ACPA Members, a 500-cubic-yard pour is a great opportunity to show the true value of an operated concrete pump. Pours this size often require a 58-meter boom. CraneNet says a 240- or 250-ton crane will equal the reach of the concrete pump. It would be able to swing a two-yard concrete bucket at 180 feet horizontally across the job site 12 times per hour, for a total of 24 yards per hour. A nationwide average for this crane is \$490 per hour, plus travel each way. Using a crane, this 500-cubic-yard pour would cost \$33.74 per cubic yard.

1 hour mobilization	\$490.00
21 hours placing concrete	10,290.00
4 counter weight trucks	5,600.00
1 hour mobilization	490.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$16,870.00</b>

If a 58-meter or comparable was available, at \$300 per hour and \$4 per yard, with an hour travel, and averaging 60 yards per hour, your customer's outlay for your concrete pumping service would be \$10.78 per yard.

1 hour mobilization	\$300.00
1 hour set up	300.00
8.3 hours placing concrete	2,490.00
\$4 per yard x 500	2,000.00
1 hour clean up	300.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$5,390.00</b>



CraneNet just cost your customer \$11,480.00 to place his slab, 68 percent more. And the labor on a 500-cubic-yard pour that takes twice as long is something no contractor could really afford. Just think about the last time one of your contractors tried to back-charge you for an hour of down time. Contracting is a high stakes game,

The point of this fictional analogy is to remind our industry, particularly the newest generation of pumpers, how valuable concrete pumping is to their customers' projects. The cost savings and production increases when using a concrete pump are enormous. While a crane and bucket are an alternative for some pours, many of the pours performed by trailer pumps and specialty booms (like elevated pours on metal decks) can't be placed any other way.

As an industry, we must understand the value of the service we provide and charge rates that substantiate the capital expenditures and exposure that it takes to operate businesses such as ours. Ready mixed concrete is an extremely expensive and highly perishable building material. Contractors will pay for well-maintained equipment with highly trained operators.

Most contractors agree that without operated concrete pumps, their projects could not be built. Similarly-priced equipment like cranes that were not designed to place concrete at high rates with pinpoint accuracy charge twice what many pumpers do. Bragging about being the cheapest in our industry is like being valedictorian of summer school—not very smart. **CP**