



## California Prisons Speed Sidewalk Construction with Environmentally Friendly Forms

### "INSIDE JOB"

The IWL (Inmate Ward Labor) Supervisor at the California Institution for Men and the California Institute for Women (both in Chino, CA) is constantly on the lookout for improving productivity and quality on the job site. After becoming aware of Poly Meta Forms®, he immediately thought this product could be a “game changer” for the multiple concrete sidewalks, slabs and curbing projects inside the prison.

The intuition of the IWL Supervisor proved correct. Not only did the lightweight poly forming system allow faster and easier concrete construction, but the State of California was also impressed with the sustainable and environmental features of the product. The wood forms previously used last only 2 or 3 times before being discarded, while the poly forms can be reused up to 200 times. Also, in comparison to wood, the poly forms are easy to clean and transport.

Some rather unique logistical factors are involved in prison construction since the work is performed under tight security. All labor is provided by prison inmates who, interesting enough, are eager to work since they are paid and can then purchase items from the prison “canteen”. Pay begins at 75¢ per hour and can advance to 95¢ per hour. Intense interviews are required before inmates are selected for the

construction work and the most violent and dangerous are automatically excluded.

Although all labor is provided by the prisoners, each 20-man inmate crew has up to 3 supervisors. The supervisors are supplied by outside union halls and are on the job to train the inmates on concrete forming and finishing techniques. One of the objectives is to teach construction skills that can help the inmates find gainful employment after being released from prison.

The State of California has made a considerable investment in Poly Meta Forms® based on both the sustainability/environmental advantages as well as the simplicity and ease of setting, stripping, cleaning and transport. The total amount of lineal feet purchased amounts to almost 2 miles of forms: 2,880' of 4" flexible forms, 1,800' of 4" straight forms, 2,640' of 6" flexible forms and 2,520' of 6" straight forms.





In addition to the interchangeable staking hardware for both the 4" and 6" forms, stacking pockets were purchased to form 8" slabs (4"+ 4"), 10" slabs (4"+ 6") and 12" curbs (6"+ 6").

The Poly Meta Forms® concrete forming system has proven to be a "Win/Win" investment. Looking at the big picture, the State of California prefers to purchase products that are sustainable. In addition to being environmentally friendly, the lightweight forms are easy to use and produce quality results. In the words of the IWL Supervisor: "The poly forms are all we use now. They give us straight, clean lines as well as providing a perfect radius."

