

Use and Handling of Bricks



Bricks

Always keep bricks dry.

Select bricks from several packs at a time, working across the layers to ensure the bricks are evenly blended.

To ensure bricks are of equal lengths for soldier courses and narrow piers, it may be necessary to grade the bricks on site before laying.

Bricks should only be cut using suitable masonry blades.

When cutting bricks, operators should use a dust mask to PF2 standard.

Mortar

A mortar mix should be chosen. Generally a Designated III mortar is used. A 1:1:6 cement : lime : sand, a 1:4 cement : sand and a 1:5 cement : sand (including plasticiser) all fall into this category.

Reference to the relevant 'National Standard' is advisable when choosing a mortar mix for a specific situation such as severe exposure (see Technical Support).

Accurate gauging of the mortar materials is essential to retain consistency of mix. Mix inconsistencies can cause colour banding of mortar joints.

Excess cement or lime in a mortar can contribute to lime bloom and efflorescence (see Technical Support).

When using a specified prepared sand-lime coloured mortar, ensure that uniform amounts of cement are added to mix.

Ensure plasticisers are added in strict accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

'Knocking up' of partially 'gone-off' mortar should be avoided.

Brickwork

It is not recommended to build brickwork during wet or frosty weather.

Joints should be filled fully with mortar. The finished joint should be well tooled to suppress the ingress of rain water.

It is better to fill the holes in the brick with mortar when forming the bed joints. Always fill the holes in the bricks on the final courses at the end of a day's laying.

Keep newly erected or incomplete brickwork covered during the setting period.

It is most important to prevent fresh brickwork becoming saturated. This is one of the principal causes of efflorescence and lime bloom. (see Technical Support).

Open top walls should be kept waterproof to prevent saturation, until they are permanently capped or protected.

Movement joints and D.P.C.'s should be positioned as recommended by the relevant National Standard (see Technical Support).

The use of a lead 'Damp Proof Tray' in the construction of brick chimneys is most important. If in any doubt, consult our Technical Services Department.

Brick Packs

A standard pack contains 500 bricks. An equivalent pack of imperial sized product contains 432 bricks. Either pack does not exceed 1400kg.

Only lift by the pallet provided.

Stand clear when being moved.

Encase in safety cage if hoisted above first storey-level.

Do not lift after straps have been broken.

Only place on level ground.

Stacking packs of bricks on site is not recommended.

If using scissors grab, do not grip sides of pack when lifting. Only the pallet should be gripped.

Cutting of Straps

Always open packs by cutting straps.

Always use strap-cutters.

Stand to side when cutting straps.

Wear eye protection when cutting straps.

A booklet prepared by the strap manufacturers dealing with the cutting of straps is available from our Technical Services Department on request.

Efflorescence / Lime Bloom

Efflorescence is a white powdery deposit which can form on the surface of the bricks and mortar joints. It is quite harmless and is water soluble. It is usually removed by natural weathering.

Lime bloom (carbonated lime) is formed as a semi-soluble white deposit in the joints. It can leach over the surface of the bricks and become insoluble as the action of the air brings about a chemical change. Lime bloom will not weather away but can be removed by cleaning so long as it is not left to solidify indefinitely.

For a fuller explanation of the 'nature, causes, prevention and treatment' of efflorescence and lime bloom please contact our Technical Services Department where information can be obtained.

Technical Support

Our Technical Services Department welcome all enquiries concerning aspects of bricks and brickwork.

For full clarification of Technical Data please ask for our 'Specification & Standard Performance Sheet'.

For full information on the 'Use of Masonry' with respect to materials, components, design and workmanship, please refer to the relevant National Standard.

Throughout the UK, reference is made to BS 5628 : Part 3.

In R.O.I., reference is made to IS 325 : Part 2. (This standard is almost identical to BS 5628 : Part 3.)

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