

If we don't stock it, it is not available

Recently, we were advised of a project where a specific manufactured framing component was specified to meet span and load requirements. When the work was being priced by the selected framing supplier, the person requesting the quote was told that a component large enough to meet the span requirements did not exist and the design would have to be modified.

Further investigation revealed that, in reality, the framing supplier only stocked a competitor's product that had a lesser maximum span, and rather than order what was correctly specified and install it, the customer was told that such an item was not available.

Unfortunately, this misleading conduct is still too common in the building industry.

Amended versions of B1/AS1 and E2/AS1 are now live

On 1 August 2011, the DBH formally introduced the amended versions of the Building Code Compliance Documents covering clause B1 *Structure* (B1/AS1) and clause E2 *External moisture* (E2/AS1). The changes bring the documents into line with the latest standards, reflect the latest studies and research, respond to changes in building practices and broaden the range of solutions available.

The changes to both Compliance Documents took effect on 1 August 2011, with a transition period through to 31 January 2012, when there will be two Acceptable Solutions or Verification Methods that can be used – the old document and the revised one. From 1 February 2012, only the new versions can be used.

B1/AS1 – slab reinforcing requirements

B1/AS1 clause 3.1.8 requires concrete slabs on ground constructed in accordance with NZS 3604:2011 on good ground to be reinforced with a minimum of 2.27 kg/m² of Grade 500E reinforcing mesh fabric conforming with AS/NZS 4671. However, Grade 500E reinforcing mesh fabric is not yet readily available in the market. Until it becomes readily available, the DBH have advised that slabs can be reinforced with either:

- Grade 300E – D10 reinforcing steel bars (conforming with AS/NZS 4671) at 300 mm centres each way with 30 mm top cover, or
- Grade 300E – D12 reinforcing steel bars (conforming to AS/NZS 4671) at 450 mm centres each way with 30 mm top cover.

B1/AS1 – tying of slab reinforcing to foundation wall reinforcing now required

B1/AS1 clause 3.1.3 now requires slab reinforcing to be tied to the reinforcing within the foundation wall – clause 3.1.3 of B1/AS1 deletes paragraph 7.5.8.1 of NZS 3604 2011. This means that the details within NZS 3604 that show unconnected reinforcing or unreinforced slabs are no longer able to be used (B1/AS1 clause 3.1.5).

B1/AS1 – concrete slab free joints

B1/AS1 clause 3.1.13 modifies the details given in NZS 3604 by adding a new NZS 3604 paragraph 7.5.8.8 covering the design and installation of free joints within concrete slabs on ground

B2/AS1 Amendment 7 – requirement for treatment of exposed timber framing

Amendment 7 to B2/AS1 simplified the requirements for the treatment of radiata pine and Douglas fir framing that is protected from the weather – that is, using H1.2 treated timber. Amendment 7 did not change the treatment requirements for timber framing that is exposed to the weather, which is required to be treated to at least H3.2. This requirement covers rafters that are exposed to the weather, such as those where the soffit of the building is not lined and elements such as timber slat deck joists and bearers.

Winter and condensation

During winter, we are usually more aware of condensation occurring within our buildings. Much of the condensation within existing dwellings is a consequence of the way we live:

- Windows are less likely to be opened to provide sufficient ventilation when it is cold and wet.
- Increased use of unflued gas heaters, which give off large amounts of water.
- Drying of wet clothes indoors.
- Not providing enough heating – condensation is more likely when the air and surfaces within our dwellings are cold. Condensation is more likely in poorly insulated houses because they are usually colder (unless large amounts of heat is being generated to warm the interior).

Condensation may also be more of an issue in recently completed buildings as a result of the moisture being emitted from materials such as concrete, timber, tile grouts, paints and the like as those materials complete their drying.

Guidance on the avoidance of internal moisture problems within buildings is provided by:

- Bulletin 447 *Preventing construction moisture problems in new buildings*
- Bulletin 460 *Internal moisture control*
- Bulletin 525 *Preventing moisture problems in timber-framed skillion roofs*.

NZS 4218:2009 Calculation Method Tool on the BRANZ website

The NZS 4218:2009 Calculation Method Tool contained within the Toolbox on the BRANZ website now has a 'Building Elements' page that allows individual window and door sizes to be entered into the programme. Once entered, they are automatically shown in the project summary sheet. This allows the user to keep track of windows entered and makes evaluation of changes made to the window and door design easier. Note that the widths and heights will need to be entered in mm, for example, enter '2000' for a 2 metre dimension.

Cited standards in the revised E2/AS1

With the revision of E2/AS1, the list of cited or referenced standards contained in the document has also been updated to reflect the most current version of the standard. This may mean that you also need to update the reference standards you need to have copies of.

Next seminar – coming to grips with the revised E2/AS1 and B1/AS1

Planning is under way for the final BRANZ seminar for 2011 in November and early December (coming to 30 locations), which will cover the changes to the recently revised compliance documents B1/AS1 and E2/AS1.

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