Guideline

January 2016

Welcome to this update on technical and informative advice for the building and construction industry on issues relating to building controls and good construction practices.

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Getting that slab level enough

Tolerances based on specified finish

When the amount of water ponding on a new slab was pointed out, a witty contractor immediately replied that the slab didn't have any hollows, just a few big humps.

As the slab forms the base on which a house is built, getting it flat and level is important – as is getting it built square and to the correct dimensions.

While set-out tolerances are given in NZS 3604:2011 *Timber-framed buildings*, tolerances for the slab surface are not.

For acceptable hollows or mounds in concrete floor slabs, the MBIE *Guide to tolerances, materials and workmanship in new residential construction 2015* references NZS 3114:1987 *Specification for concrete surface finishes* (Part 3). The tolerance is based on the specified interior finish – U2 floated, U3 trowelled or U11 ground finish.

Table 3 of NZS 3114:1987 limits abrupt changes to 3 mm except for floors that have a thin sheet or tile flooring specified where no abrupt changes are permitted. Gradual changes are limited to 5 mm maximum in a 3 m length for U2, U3 and U11 finishes except where the floor has a thin sheet or tile flooring specified, where a 3 mm in 3 m maximum applies.

Specification conflicts

Refer to the designer

While we should endeavour to avoid them, situations can arise on site where the designer's specification of a product or system differs from that of the manufacturer or supplier. In these cases, the builder should refer the conflict back to the designer to resolve. Simply carrying on is not recommended because:

- the proposed use may not be appropriate for the product or system
- the product or system may not be warranted by the supplier if the designer's instructions are followed
- the installation may not be deemed to be Code compliant if it is at variance with the supplier's installation instructions.

Being specific

On the point of specifications, we still hear of documents that are generic in nature or include information that is not relevant to the project it purports to describe. Specifications need to be specific to the project in hand.

Intermediate floor framing – boundary joist fixing requirements

For floors not acting as a diaphragm

The fixing requirements for the joists and boundary joists or end blocking for intermediate floor framing are as follows:

- For 25 mm thick continuous boundary joists being nailed to the end of each joist – each joist must be fixed to the top plate with 2 x 100 x 3.75 mm skew nails.
- For solid blocking (at 1800 mm maximum centres) to joists – 2 x 100 x 3.75 mm skew nails through each face of the blocking and into the top plate and end nailed through the joists. Joists must be fixed to the top plate below with 2 x 100 x 3.75 mm skew nails.

The above fixing requirements apply to floors that are not acting as a diaphragm.

New licences required for asbestos removal

Check whether your business will need an asbestos removal licence

A national licensing system for asbestos removal is being introduced from 4 April 2016. Will your business need a licence? Three types of licences will be available under the new asbestos regulations, which cover what types of asbestos can be removed:

Class A licence

Any type or quantity of asbestos or asbestos-containing material, including:

- any amount of friable asbestos or asbestos containing material (ACM)
- any amount of asbestos-contaminated dust or debris (ACD)
- any amount of non-friable asbestos or ACM.

Class B licence

- Any amount of non-friable asbestos or ACM.
- ACD associated with removing any amount of non-friable asbestos or ACM.

Asbestos assessor licence

- An asbestos assessor provides air quality monitoring during removal work, inspects the finished job and provides a clearance certificate.
- A licensed asbestos assessor will be required to assess Class A asbestos removal work from 2018 onwards.

No licence is required for asbestos removal:

- up to and including 10 m^2 of non-friable asbestos or ACM, cumulatively, over the whole course of the removal project for the site
- ACD that is associated with removing 10 m^2 or less of non-friable asbestos or ACM and any associated minor ACD.

Other important points:

- The new removal licences will be held by a business, rather than a person.
- For businesses requiring a Class A and Class B licence:
    - you can apply for a Class A and Class B licence from 4 April 2016
    - information on the application criteria and process will be available in early 2016.

- Current certificate of competence holders will be able to continue removing asbestos (in the categories specified on their certificate) and supervise asbestos removal until their certificate expires.

If you will need a Class B licence from 4 April 2016, get in touch with WorkSafe now to register your interest and speed up your licence application. For more details, click here.

More detail can be also found at www.asbestosaware.co.nz.

Health and safety reminder
Know the new requirements

The Health and Safety at Work Act has been passed in Parliament and will come into force on 4 April 2016. You can read more about what the new law will mean on the WorkSafe website and subscribe to Health and Safety at Work Act updates.

BRANZ B-RISK workshop
Register now

This full-day workshop is intended for new users of B-RISK and those users who are seeking a refresher.

The workshop will be a mixture of presentation/lecture content and worked examples during the day. Questions and discussion will be encouraged.

The following topics will be covered during the workshop:
- Basic refresher on zone modelling principles.
- Guidance on constructing models to represent building layouts, including room size and shape and simplifying models.
- Modelling tall shafts and long corridors.
- Updated guidance on the use of ceiling vents to connect vertically offset compartments.
- Using balcony and adhered spill plumes and mechanical ventilation for smoke extraction.
- Automatically opening/closing vents during a simulation.
- C/VM2 rules for modelling fully developed and post-flashover fires.
- Understanding and interpreting vent flow data.
- Tenability calculations.

You will need to bring a laptop with the software pre-installed. A link and instructions for the installation of B-RISK and Smokeview will be sent on confirmation of registering for this workshop.

The full-day seminars will be presented by BRANZ Senior Fire Research Scientist Colleen Wade and BRANZ Fire Research Engineer Dr Haejun Park and will be held at these locations:
- Wellington – Monday 22 February – InterContinental Wellington
- Auckland – Tuesday 23 February – Crowne Plaza Auckland
- Christchurch – Thursday 25 February – Sudima Christchurch Airport

Online registration is available now.