Working in Cold Weather

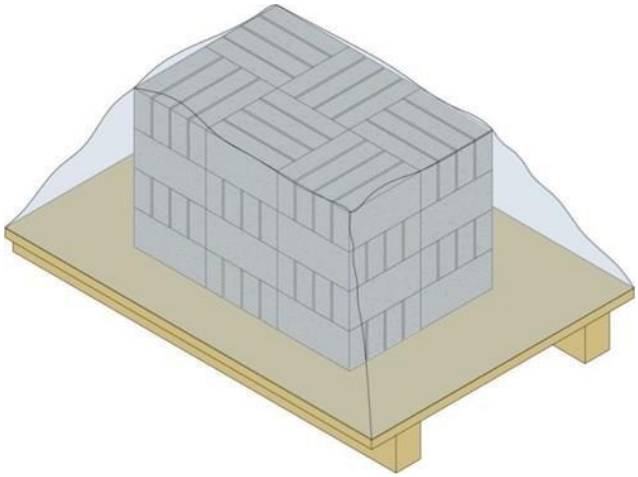
Functional Requirements

To meet the functional requirements of Chapter 2 of the LABC Technical Manual, minimum working temperatures should never fall below 2°C when working with masonry. It is very important that regular temperature readings are taking when working during cold weather periods.

Thermometers should be placed away from direct sunlight, preferably in a shaded area. It's important to consider wind chill and weather exposure when assessing the temperature. Make necessary allowances for those sites which are deemed to have higher levels of exposure.

Protecting your Materials

When working in cold weather it's important to remember that you need to be providing covers to protect your materials from frost, snow and ice. This is particularly true of bricks, blocks, sand and cement. Frozen materials should *never* be used in any circumstances.



Concrete

- Ready Mixed Concrete – should not drop below 5°C. You should also ensure that 'immature' concrete is prevented from freezing before sufficient strength has been achieved.
- Site Mixed Concrete – Site mixing of concrete is acceptable in temperatures as low as 2°C, provided the ground is not frozen and the concrete is protected during curing.

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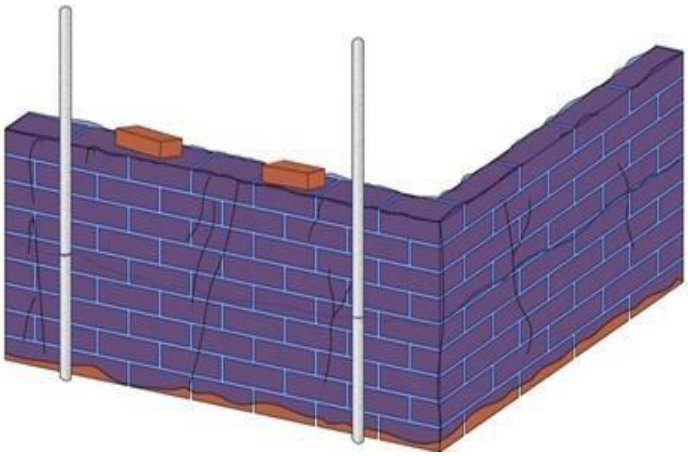
Curing of concrete

Low temperatures can lead to longer curing periods, during which it is important to prevent freezing by adequate protection. In extreme cases heating may be required.

Protecting your Masonry

Any newly built walls or other masonry construction will require protection against frost where temperatures are expected to drop below 2°C. You should be protecting all masonry with polythene or hessian, ideally. If temperatures are expected to fall to an extremely low level, insulation boards may be required and heating may even need to be considered.



Finishes including rendering, plastering and screeds

Rendering should only be finished if the temperature outside is at *least* 2°C and rising. There should be no frost within the construction that is to be rendered and where possible, rendering should not take place where freezing weather conditions are anticipated prior to adequate curing.

It's important to note that no plastering or screeding should take place unless the building is free from frost. It is acceptable to use internal heating to warm the building however it's important to make sure that the heaters to not produce excessive vapour within the dwelling. Adequate ventilation should be provided to allow moist air to escape. The structure should be appropriately pre-heated before plastering and continue to be heated as the plaster

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