

PACKAGED BRICKS & PAVERS HANDLING & COSHH INFORMATION

The Health & Safety at Work Act, Consumer Protection Act and other legislation require us to provide relevant information regarding our products in respect of handling, processing, storage, transportation or disposal without risk to health.

HANDLING & STORAGE

Fired clay brick is an inert material, which presents no risk to health and safety through handling or use, subject to good site practice being followed.

The use of safety clothing such as safety hats, boots and industrial gloves is strongly recommended whenever practicable, to minimise the risks associated with falling objects and sharp edges.

If bricks are hit with a trowel, bolster, scutch, etc., eye protection should be worn as sharp vitrified clay chips may fly.

Individual bricks are grouped together into packs. Packs are heavy and great care should be taken in their handling. Equipment used for lifting packs must be adequate for the weight involved. The weight of the pack varies according to the size of the product and quantity per pack, but the maximum weight of each standard pack from Ibstock Brick Limited factories is 1.9 tonnes approximately.

These packs may be delivered on disposable wooden pallets or they may be held together as a unit by plastic or steel straps. In both cases, the products may be contained by a plastic shrink-wrap, if requested by the customer.

All personnel involved in the handling of packs should be made aware that both steel and plastic straps could snap in certain circumstances, allowing the products to fall:

- **AVOID** **abnormal shocks to the packs**
- **AVOID** **sliding one pack against any face of another pack**
- **NOTE** **straps can deteriorate over a period of time**

Wherever possible, packs should be placed singly on dry, level ground.

It may be possible to stack the packs up to 3 high if they are carefully placed directly on top of each other, without touching adjacent packs, by a competent forklift driver, provided the stacking ground is hard, level and designed to carry the weight. If there are any indications of instability, such as the stack leaning, then the packs should be immediately re-stacked at ground level.

Any pallets supplied by the client to store or transport packs must be very close in size to the pack dimensions and must be of adequate strength to support the weight of product placed on it.

ON SITE HANDLING

The strapping, if provided must never be used to lift packs. Only use the holes in the packs or pallets provided. It is recommended that suitable handling forks should have a width of 90mm and be 1100mm long; it is also recommended that grabs should only be used on solid packs.

It is recommended that brick void packs should always be lifted via the void holes, by a fork lift truck or similar device. This allows for correct distribution of the pack weight under the void layer, which is the layer the straps are supporting. However quite often "side grabs" are used especially on lorries. It is recommended that the grab should ALWAYS pick the pack up on the NON STRAP side i.e. the brick header side and as near to the bottom of the pack as possible. This method ensures the grab has all the weight of the brick pack. The pack should NOT be "grabbed" at the top of the pack because all the brick weight is left supported on the straps.

Some pack configurations (typically a 500 brick all header pack) can be split into 5 @ 100 brick legs or blades. These legs are only stable if stored or moved around while laid flat on a pallet - they must not be moved in the vertical position.

Where packs are lifted more than 1 metre above ground level, a safety cage of adequate dimensions around the pack should be used. All personnel must stand well clear of packs when they are being lifted or moved.

If it is considered necessary to store a brick pack above ground level, it should only be placed on a suitably designed staging with guard rails and brick nets of appropriate height to prevent any bricks falling to lower working areas.

PROCESSING

Straps should be cut by wire cutters and not burst by the application of levered pressure. When cutting straps, the operative should stand to the side of the strap being cut and not in line with that strap. Highly tensioned straps can spring away from the package when tension is released. In accordance with the Personal Protective Equipment At Work Regulations 1992, persons cutting wire strapping under tension MUST wear suitable eye protectors (reference: BS EN 166, 167 & 168).

Strapping around brick packs has sharp edges and suitable gloves should always be worn when handling this material. When straps are cut, protective footwear and overalls should also be worn because bricks may fall from the pack, particularly if the pack has been subjected to irregular handling or storage.

DISPOSAL

Redundant packing materials should be gathered together daily and placed in a waste disposal skips for removal to an approved tip.

The burning of any packaging materials is not normally permitted on sites; some plastic materials may give off harmful fumes. If permission is granted for the burning of wooden pallets great care must be exercised to ensure that environmental pollution controls are not contravened.

COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations)

In general, fired clay brick products contain 50 - 70% silica. If powered tools are used to cut this product, substantial amounts of dust may be produced. Depending on the environment and the method of cutting, it is possible that some respirable silica may be generated.

The main effect in humans of the inhalation of respirable silica dust is silicosis. There is sufficient information to conclude that the relative lung cancer risk is increased in persons with silicosis...Therefore preventing the onset of silicosis will also reduce the risk of cancer. Since a clear threshold for silicosis development cannot be identified, any reduction of exposure will reduce the risk of silicosis.

Under the COSHH Regulations, the Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) for respirable silica is 0.1mg/m³ (from October 2006). The only reliable way to ascertain the levels of individual exposure during cutting is to carry out detailed personal monitoring.

Persons carrying out a dry cutting operation MUST wear suitable respiratory protection. A suitable respirator or disposable mask meeting BS EN 149 (Specification For Filtering Half Masks To Protect Against Particles) is recommended. The use of appropriate respiratory protection by those working near to the dry cutting operation should be considered.

Our advice would be to avoid dry cutting of bricks wherever possible. Wet cutting reduces the amount of dust generated and is a preferable method of cutting.

During the cutting operation, the brick should be firmly held by a mechanical clamp or similar device to prevent movement.

MANUAL HANDLING

An individual standard brick typically weighs 2 to 3 kg (special bricks may weigh more) and presents low risk of a manual handling injury. We recommend that the HSE Information Sheet Guidelines (Construction Sheet Number 37 - 'Handling Building Blocks') be followed.

Repetitive handling of any product including bricks can give rise to Upper Limb Disorders such as muscular strains and sprains. Specialist help should be sought for anyone involved in this type of work.

IT IS THE CUSTOMERS RESPONSIBILITY TO OBTAIN TECHNICAL DATA ON ALL MATERIALS TO BE USED WITH OUR BRICKS & PAVERS.

NO LIABILITY CAN BE ACCEPTED IN RESPECT OF OTHER MATERIALS USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR PRODUCTS.