



Chapter 6.3



Internal walls

This chapter gives guidance on meeting the Technical Requirements for internal walls, including:

- separating and compartment walls
- internal partition walls.

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6.3.1 Compliance

Also see: Chapter 2.1

Internal walls shall comply with the Technical Requirements.

Internal walls, including separating, compartment and partition walls, which comply with the guidance in this chapter will generally be acceptable.

6.3.2 Provision of information

Designs and specifications shall be produced in a clearly understandable format, include all relevant information and be distributed to all appropriate personnel.

Design and specification information should be issued to site supervisors, relevant specialist subcontractors and suppliers, and include the following information:

- wall layout, with all dimensions shown
- position and size of openings and lintels
- details of junctions, indicating fire-stopping where applicable
- details of wall constructions and materials, ties and restraints
- details of junctions between a separating or compartment wall and a pitched or flat roof
- details of pipes and cables where they penetrate walls, including fire-resisting walls
- manufacturers' recommendations for assembly and fixing of propriety components.

6.3.3 Supporting load-bearing internal walls

Load-bearing internal walls shall be adequately supported by foundations.

Load-bearing internal walls should have:

- a foundation, or
- a means of support that transfers loads safely to a foundation.

Foundations should be in accordance with Part 4 of these Standards, including, where applicable, Chapter 4.3 Strip and trench fill foundations and Chapter 4.4 Raft, pile, pier and beam foundations.

6.3.4 Masonry walls

Also see: Chapters 6.1, 6.4, 6.8 and 9.2

Internal masonry walls shall be designed to support and transfer loads to foundations safely and without undue movement. Issues to be taken into account include:

- 1) structural elements
- 2) mortar mix and jointing
- 3) workmanship
- 4) bonding and tying
- 5) lateral restraint
- 6) masonry separating walls
- 7) lintels and beams.

6.3.4.1 Structural elements

Structural design of masonry walls should be in accordance with BS EN 1996-1-1.

Bricks and blocks should be selected in accordance with their intended use and as recommended in Table 1.

Table 1: Bricks and blocks in buildings up to three storeys high

Height of wall ⁽¹⁾	Unit	Minimum compressive strength ⁽²⁾
One or two storey	Blocks	2.9 N/mm ²
	Bricks	9.0 N/mm ²
Lowest storey of a three-storey wall, or where individual storeys exceed 2.7m	Blocks	7.3 N/mm ²
	Bricks	13.0 N/mm ²
Upper storeys of a three-storey wall	Blocks	2.9 N/mm ²
	Bricks	9.0 N/mm ²

Notes

1. The compressive strengths shown are applicable where the floor to ceiling distance is not greater than 2.7m.
2. The compressive strengths shown are applicable where the roof is of timber construction.

Where buildings are more than three storeys high, masonry should be designed in accordance with Technical Requirement R5, and the block strength specified in the design.

Precast concrete blocks

Concrete blocks should comply with BS EN 771. The maximum load-bearing capacity of the wall should not exceed the recommendations of the manufacturer.

Flue blocks should be in accordance with Chapter 6.8 Fireplaces, chimneys and flues.

Bricks

Bricks should comply with the relevant British Standards:

Clay bricks	BS EN 771-1
Calcium silicate bricks	BS EN 771-2
Concrete bricks	BS EN 771-3

When used in a separating wall, masonry should:

- be used in accordance with the design
- meet the structural, fire and acoustic requirements of relevant Building Regulations.

6.3.4.2 Mortar mix and jointing

Mortar should:

- be the correct mix and used within two hours, unless it is retarded mortar
- not be re-tempered if it has started to set
- include sulfate-resisting cement where required.

Admixtures, retarded mortars and premixed mortars should be:

- compatible with masonry and other components
- used in accordance with Clause 6.1.14 and the manufacturer’s recommendations.

Air-entraining agents:

- can help reduce frost damage but cannot be used as anti-freeze
- should be used in accordance with Clause 6.1.14 and the manufacturer’s recommendations.
- should be carefully measured for each batch

Bricks and blocks should be laid on a full bed of mortar, with perpend joints solidly filled.

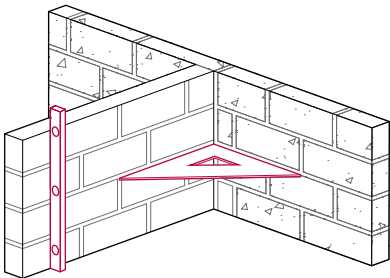
Where walls are to be finished with wet plaster, joints should be raked out to a shallow depth to provide a key, unless the units have suitable texture or metal lathing is used, to ensure adequate bond strength is achieved. For dry lining, mortar joints should be struck off flush. For further guidance, see Clause 9.2.3.

6.3.4.3 Workmanship

Internal masonry walls and associated works should be:

- constructed in lifts/stages to prevent the distortion of wall panels during construction
- accurately set out
- reasonably plane and true
- plumb, with courses level.

Figure 1: Square and plumb walls



6.3.4.4 Bonding and tying

Internal masonry walls should:

- maintain a regular bonding pattern
- be fully bonded or tied, either with a tooth at alternate courses, or an expanded metal strip or wall tie at a maximum vertical spacing of 300mm.
- not include bricks or blocks of different types in the same wall, to avoid cracking

Joist filling should be brick or blockwork, without excessive mortar joints.

Figure 2: Bonded connection

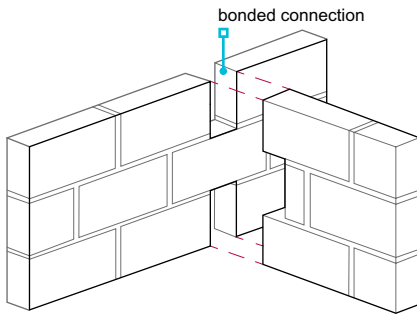


Figure 3: Tied connection

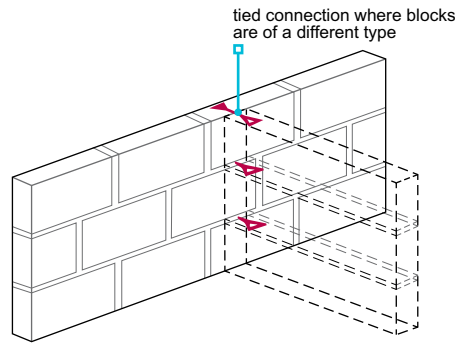
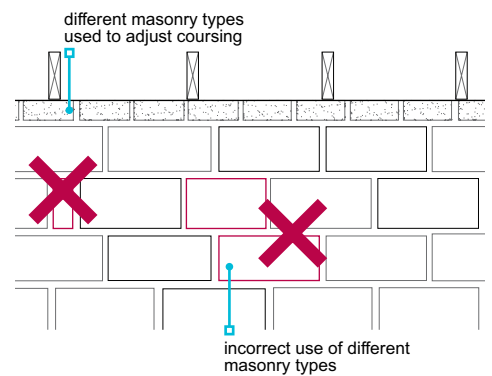


Figure 4: Incorrect use of materials



6.3.4.5 Lateral restraint

Load-bearing masonry walls, including separating walls, should be provided with lateral restraint at:

- each floor level
- ceiling level below a roof.

Restraint straps should be provided to separating walls on each level, at a maximum of 2m centres, when the floor:

- is not on, or near, the same level
- does not provide adequate restraint.

Lateral restraint should be provided in accordance with Chapter 6.4 Timber and concrete upper floors.

Timber floors

Adequate restraint can be provided by timber floors where joists have a minimum 90mm bearing. Alternatively, restraint should be provided by:

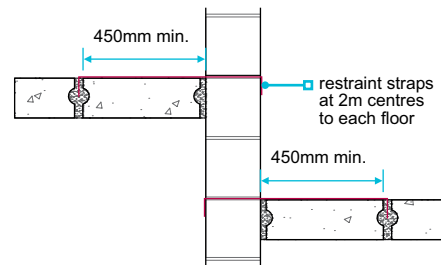
- restraint straps with a minimum 30mm x 5mm cross-section, or
- restraint type joist hangers to BS EN 845-1 with a performance equivalent to restraint straps, or
- proprietary straps in accordance with Chapter 6.4 Timber and concrete upper floors.

Concrete floors

Adequate restraint can be provided by concrete floors that have a minimum 90mm bearing on to the wall. Alternatively, restraint should be provided by:

- restraint straps that are a minimum of 450mm long, with the end turned down between a joint in the concrete floor or suitably fixed with screws.

Figure 5: Restraint straps to concrete floors



6.3.4.6 Masonry separating walls

Both leaves of a masonry cavity separating wall should be tied together to provide structural stability. The type of tie and spacing should limit the sound transmission across the cavity in accordance with relevant Building Regulations.

6.3.4.7 Lintels and beams

Lintels and beams should be specified according to loads and spans:

- in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations, and
- designed by an engineer in accordance with Technical Requirement R5.

For masonry construction:

- concrete and steel lintels are suitable
- timber lintels should not be used
- lintels should extend beyond the end of each opening in accordance with Table 2.

Figure 6: Lintel positioning

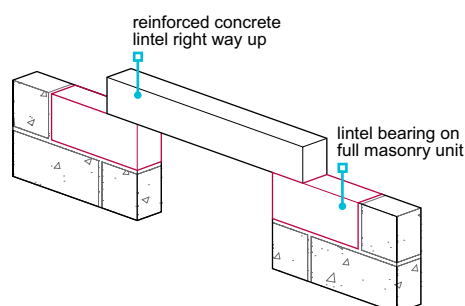


Table 2: Lintel bearings

Span (m)	Minimum length of bearing (mm)
Up to 1.2	100 ⁽¹⁾
Over 1.2	150

Note

1. Minimum bearing lengths should be in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.

Lintels and beams should:

- have padstones where required
- be the correct way up
- bear on a full masonry unit, and be level and bedded on a solid bed of suitable mortar
- not have soft or non-durable packing
- have appropriate fire resistance in accordance with relevant Building Regulations.

6.3.5 Load-bearing timber walls

Also see: Chapters 2.1, 6.2 and 9.2

Internal load-bearing timber walls shall be designed to support and transfer loads to foundations safely and without undue movement. Issues to be taken into account include:

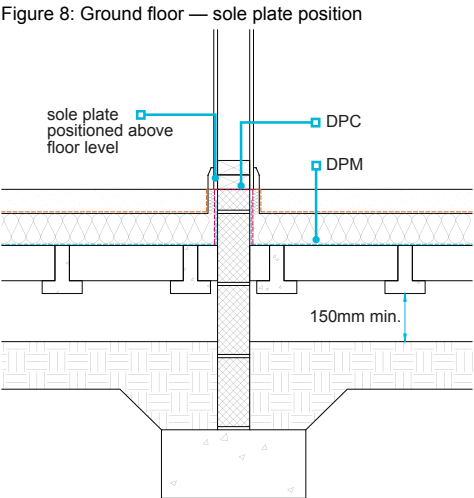
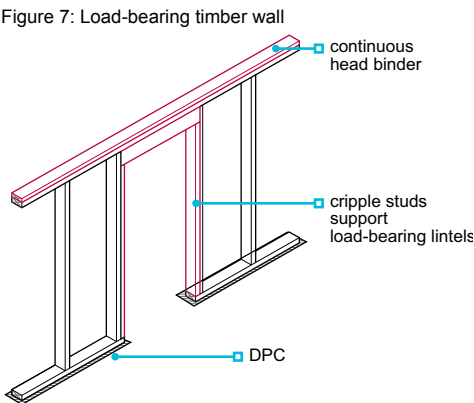
- 1) structural elements
- 2) timber separating walls
- 3) timber quality.

6.3.5.1 Structural elements

Structural design of load-bearing timber walls should be in accordance with BS EN 1995-1-1.

When constructing structural elements:

- the underside of the lowest sole plate should be positioned at or above internal finished floor level (see Figure 8)
- individual studs, rails and head binders should be 38mm x 75mm minimum, although larger sizes may be required to achieve an adequate level of fire resistance
- studs should be spaced at a maximum of 600mm centres
- mid height noggings should be installed when required for additional stiffness
- lintels and cripple studs should be provided to each opening, except when the stud spacing is unaffected
- multiple studs should be included to support multiple joists, beams, girder trusses and other point loads, unless otherwise specified by the designer
- where a head binder is not provided, joists, roof trusses and other similar loads should bear directly over studs
- framing joints should be secured with a minimum of two nails per joint
- where internal walls are made up from panels, structural continuity should be maintained, eg by the use of a continuous head binder.



6.3.5.2 Twin leaf timber separating walls

The type and spacing of wall straps should limit sound transmission across the cavity in accordance with relevant Building Regulations.

Wall straps should:

- be specified in accordance with the system designer's recommendations
- have a maximum cross-section of 40mm x 3mm
- be fixed below ceiling level
- be spaced a minimum of 1.2m horizontally.

6.3.5.3 Timber quality

Timber should be of the appropriate grade, moisture content and size to support the imposed loads.

Structural timber components should be of a suitable strength class, as specified by the designer to BS EN 338. Solid structural timber should be:

- machine graded to BS EN 14081, or visually graded to BS 4978 for softwoods or BS 5756 for hardwoods
- assigned a strength class based on BS EN 1912 when visually graded
- dry graded
- marked in accordance with BS EN 14081.

Further guidance on strength classes for certain timber species can be found in PD 6693.

Engineered wood products such as I-section or metal-web studs should be assessed in accordance with Technical Requirement R3.

Timber should have a maximum moisture content of 20% at the time of dry lining to minimise shrinkage.

6.3.6 Fire resistance

Also see: Chapters 6.2, Part 8.0 and 9.2

Internal walls shall have adequate resistance to the spread of fire. Issues to be taken into account include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1) fire resistance | 3) services |
| 2) cavity barriers and fire-stopping | 4) materials. |

6.3.6.1 Fire resistance

Internal walls, including where a garage is attached to or forms an integral part of a dwellinghouse, should provide fire resistance in accordance with relevant Building Regulations.

6.3.6.2 Cavity barriers and fire-stopping

Cavity barriers and fire-stopping should be provided in accordance with relevant Building Regulations.

When providing cavity barriers, they should be:

- sized appropriately for the cavity
- tightly fitted to a rigid construction
- mechanically fixed in position
- fixed in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.

Adequate precautions should be taken to prevent fire spread at junctions between compartment or separating walls and a pitched or flat roof, including any boxed eaves.

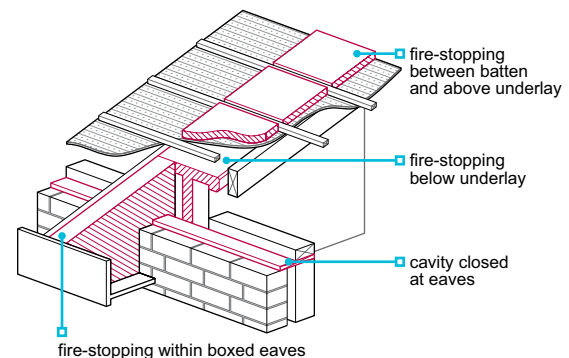
Compartment or separating walls should:

- stop approximately 25mm below the top of adjacent roof framing
- have soft fire-stopping material installed above and below the roofing underlay to allow for movement in roof timbers to prevent 'hogging' of the tiles.

Any fire-stopping should be:

- installed to seal the imperfection of fit or design tolerance
- fixed in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.

Figure 9: Junction of compartment wall and roof



6.3.6.3 Services

Where services such as pipes, cables and ducting pass through fire-resisting walls, penetrations should be fire-stopped.

Fire-stopping should be:

- in accordance with relevant Building Regulations and the design information
- completed neatly.

6.3.6.4 Materials

The selected materials used for cavity barriers and fire-stopping should be appropriate for the application and meet the performance requirements of the relevant Building Regulations.

6.3.7 Sound insulation

Also see: BS 8000-8

Walls shall be insulated with materials of suitable thickness and density to provide adequate resistance to the transmission of sound. Issues to be taken into account include:

- 1) sound-resisting construction
- 2) rooms which contain a WC.

6.3.7.1 Sound-resisting construction

Masonry separating walls

In England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, separating walls may be registered and built in accordance with Robust Details as an alternative to pre-completion sound testing.

To maintain sound insulation:

- the correct blocks should be used
- fully fill joints, mortar beds and perpend
- use only approved wall ties
- wall ties should be spaced 900mm minimum horizontally and 450mm minimum vertically
- avoid any reduction in the thickness of masonry
- ensure spaces around joists are fully filled with masonry and pointed with sealant around the joist
- close the junction between separating and external cavity walls with flexible cavity stops
- care should be taken when specifying dry lining, as the thickness of plasterboard layers, and the methods of sealing and fixing, can affect the transmission of sound
- holes, voids and hairline cracks should be avoided or made good, as they can significantly reduce the effectiveness of a sound-insulating wall.

In masonry separating cavity walls, wall ties should be type A in accordance with relevant Building Regulations.

Solid separating walls can be taken through the inner leaf of an external cavity wall and tied or bonded in accordance with either relevant Building Regulations or Robust Details guidance.

Chases can reduce the sound insulation value of a wall and should:

- be cut only where specified in the design
- not be cut using impact power tools where there is a risk of damage
- not exceed 1/6 of the thickness of the single leaf where horizontal
- not exceed 1/3 of the thickness of the single leaf where vertical
- not be chased where hollow blocks are used, unless specifically permitted by the manufacturer
- be fully filled with mortar
- be staggered on each side of the wall to avoid them being back-to-back.

Figure 10: Separating wall junction

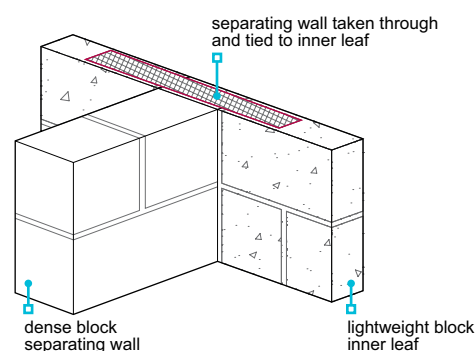
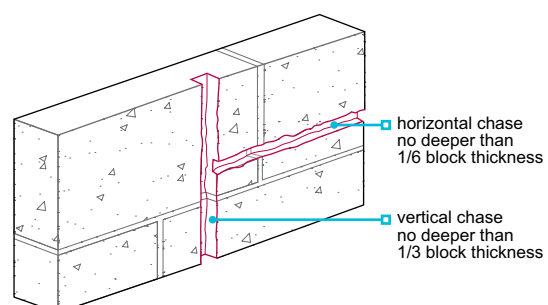


Figure 11: Vertical and horizontal chases



Separating walls of framed construction

Separating walls of framed construction should not have gaps in the:

- mineral wool quilt
- plasterboard layers
- fire-stopping.

Flanking walls

The construction of the flanking wall and the position of openings should comply with relevant Building Regulations.

6.3.7.2 Rooms containing a WC

The construction should comply with relevant Building Regulations, including the recommended sound reduction between rooms that include a WC and adjacent:

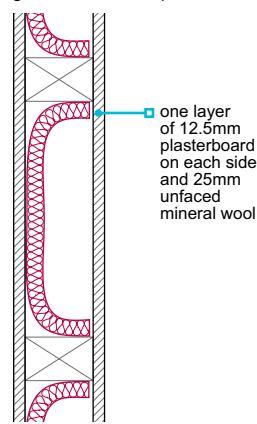
- living rooms
- dining rooms
- studies
- bedrooms, except where the WC is ensuite.

Studwork

To achieve the required level of sound reduction, 75mm timber studwork or 45mm steel framing should be constructed with either:

- two layers of 12.5mm plasterboard (each sheet 10kg/m² minimum) on each side, with joints staggered and filled
- one layer of 12.5mm plasterboard (each sheet 10kg/m² minimum) on each side and 25mm unfaced mineral wool (10kg/m³ minimum) between the studs, with all joints well sealed.

Figure 12: Acoustic partition



Other forms of studwork construction may be acceptable where in accordance with the guidance in supporting documents to the relevant Building Regulations or where independent evidence of performance is available.

Blockwork partitions

Masonry partitions provide adequate sound insulation where:

- blocks have a minimum density of 600kg/m³ and are finished on both sides with 13mm of plaster or 12.5mm plasterboard, and
- blocks are tied at every course to adjoining walls, with joints fully filled.

Further guidance can be found in the relevant Building Regulations.

Proprietary partitions

Independent test evidence of the system's performance is required in accordance with Technical Requirement R3. Criteria for testing is not provided in R3.

Sound insulation of soil pipes in floor voids and boxings

All sections of soil and vent pipes, including those in bathrooms or ground floor stub stacks, should be fully soundproofed.

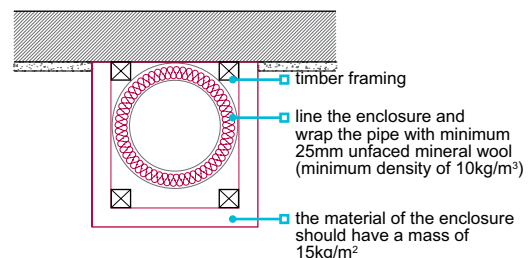
Where soil and vent pipes run horizontally through a floor void, above or below a habitable room, they should be:

- wrapped in at least 25mm of unfaced mineral wool (10kg/m³ minimum)
- adequately supported to avoid contact with the floor decking or ceiling.

Sound insulation should be provided to soil pipes passing through homes by:

- an encased boxing, using material (15kg/m²) and
- wrapping the pipe with a minimum 25mm of unfaced mineral wool (10kg/m³ minimum). The insulation should be continued through the thickness of each sound-insulating floor.

Figure 13: Sound insulation to soil and vent pipe



Soil and vent pipes which hold a satisfactory assessment by an appropriate independent technical approvals authority acceptable to NHBC, may be acceptable where the requirements of the relevant Building Regulations are met.

6.3.8 Partitions: internal non load-bearing

Non load-bearing partitions shall have adequate strength and support.

The following constructions are acceptable:

- masonry partitions
- timber partitions using 63mm x 38mm studs, rails and head binders with compatible spacing and plasterboard thickness
- steel partitions using studs, and head and base rails, from a minimum section of 43mm x 32mm x 0.45mm
- proprietary partitions in accordance with Technical Requirement R3.

Walls and partitions should:

- be appropriately supported
- not be supported by a floating floor which incorporates a compressible layer, unless the material is specifically manufactured for that purpose
- be used in accordance with manufacturers' guidance.

Masonry partitions should be supported on:

- foundations
- other masonry partitions or walls
- concrete floors
- steel or concrete beams, which may require padstones.

Masonry partitions should not be supported by timber joists or beams.

Where stud partitions or proprietary plasterboard partitions are supported by a timber floor, extra noggings or joists should be specified, unless it can be shown that the deck can transfer the load without undue movement.

6.3.9 Construction of timber partitions

Also see: Chapter 9.2

Construction of timber stud internal walls shall ensure adequate stability, including:

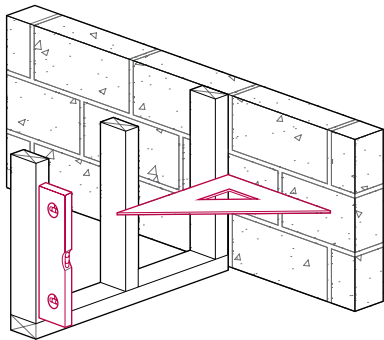
- 1) setting out and workmanship
2) size of timber members
3) fixing.

6.3.9.1 Setting out and workmanship

Timber partitions should be:

- placed so the lowest timber is positioned at or above the internal finished floor level (see Figure 8)
- correctly positioned, square and plumb
- have studwork spaced at centres to suit the plasterboard thickness
- have extra studs at openings, as required.

Figure 14: Setting out square and plumb



6.3.9.2 Size of timber members

Timber partitions should be constructed in accordance with the design information. Unless designed otherwise, the minimum specification for all partitions should be in accordance with Table 3.

Table 3: Timber sizes for partition walls

Component	Size
Sole plate, rails and head binders	63mm x 38mm
Studs	63mm x 38mm at maximum 600mm centres
Blocking/nogging for support of plasterboard	43mm x 38mm
Blocking/nogging for other purposes	63mm x 38mm

Framing joints should be secured with two nails per joint.

6.3.9.3 Fixing

Partitions should:

- be firmly fixed to each other and to abutting walls; noggings or extra studs should be used where necessary
- be fixed to the structure where possible
- be fixed to noggings when parallel to structural elements
- not be over wedged against floor joists or roof trusses.

Where partitions are non load-bearing, allowance should be made for floors, ceilings or roofs to deflect as necessary, so that the partition does not become load-bearing, in accordance with the design.

Figure 15: Partition abutment

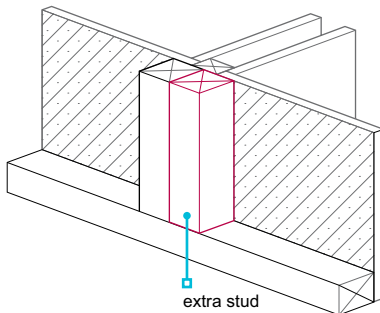


Figure 16: Wall head fixing to joist

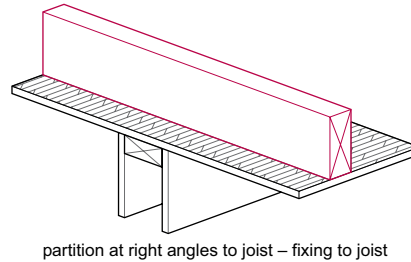


Figure 17: Wall head fixing to nogging

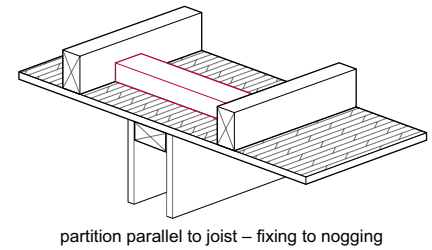


Figure 18: Partition fixing to joist

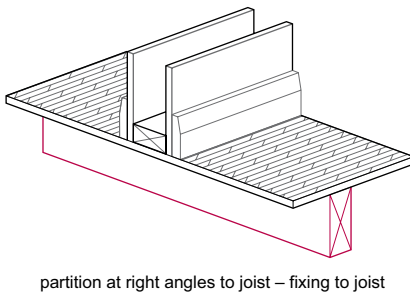


Figure 19: Partition fixing to nogging

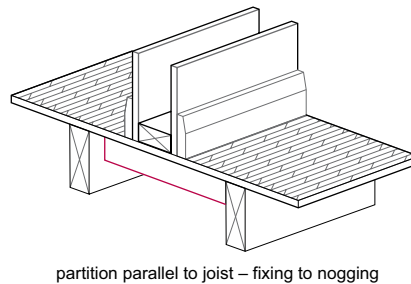
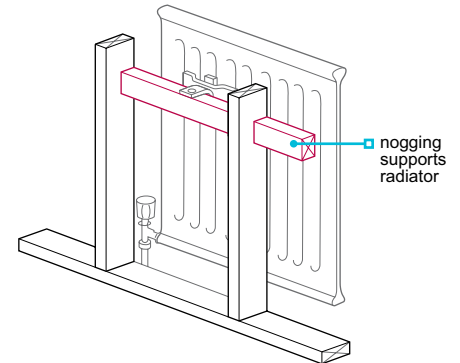


Figure 20: Additional nogging support



Noggings should be provided to support fittings, such as radiators, wall-mounted boilers, sanitary fittings and kitchen units, etc.

6.3.10 Construction of steel framed partitions

Non load-bearing steel framed walls shall be suitably constructed.

Noggings or straps should be provided as required to support fittings, such as radiators, wall-mounted boilers, sanitary fittings and kitchen units, etc. Non load-bearing partitions should not be wedged against floor joists, ceiling joists or roof trusses. Allowance should be made for floors, ceilings or roofs to deflect as necessary, so that the partition does not become load-bearing, in accordance with the design. They should be:

- constructed in accordance with manufacturers' requirements and the design
- correctly positioned, square and plumb
- supported on a structural floor, but not a floating floor that incorporates a compressible layer, unless specifically designed for that purpose
- fixed to the floor at the head, to each other and to abutting walls
- provided with extra studs at openings where required
- finished in accordance with Chapter 9.2 Wall and ceiling finishes.

Figure 21: Deflection head

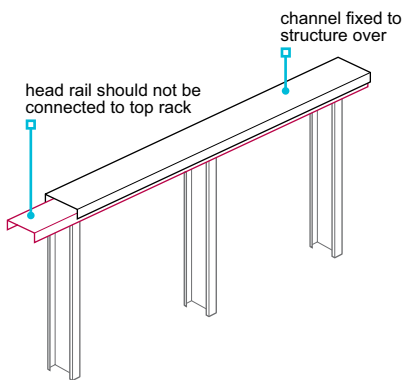
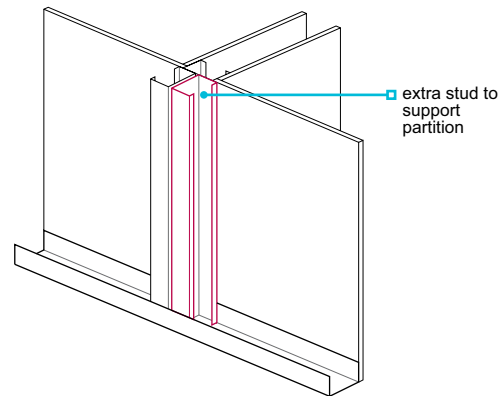


Figure 22: Partitioning abutment



6.3.11 Construction of proprietary systems

Proprietary partition systems shall be suitable for their intended purpose and erected in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

Proprietary partitions should be assessed in accordance with Technical Requirement R3 and:

- constructed and specified according to the manufacturer's recommendations, including construction sequence
- correctly positioned, square and plumb.

Timber or other additional fixings should be provided for radiators, electrical outlets, switches, etc.

6.3.12 Plasterboard

Also see: Chapter 9.2

Plasterboard shall be of a suitable thickness for its intended use.

Dry lining should comply with BS 8000-8. Plasterboard should be to BS EN 520 or BS EN 15283, and be:

- 9.5mm for stud spacing up to 450mm
- 12.5mm or thicker, for stud spacing up to 600mm.

Tapered edge boards should be used where the plasterboard is to be jointed before decoration.

For fire and sound-resisting walls (eg separating walls and walls to WCs), the correct thickness, number of layers and sealing should be specified in the design information.

For guidance on the use of plasterboard in wet areas ie, bath and shower areas, please refer to Chapter 9.2 Wall and ceiling finishes.

6.3.13 Damp proof courses

Also see: Chapter 5.4

DPCs shall be installed where required to prevent moisture entering the building.

Load-bearing partition walls built on foundations should have a DPC. Where partitions which could be affected by residual damp (eg timber or steel) are placed on concrete floors, a DPC should be provided directly below, even where there is a DPM beneath the slab.

DPCs should be:

- at least the width of the wall or partition
- linked with any adjoining DPM
- continuous or lapped by a minimum of 100mm.

Figure 23: DPC provision — masonry partition

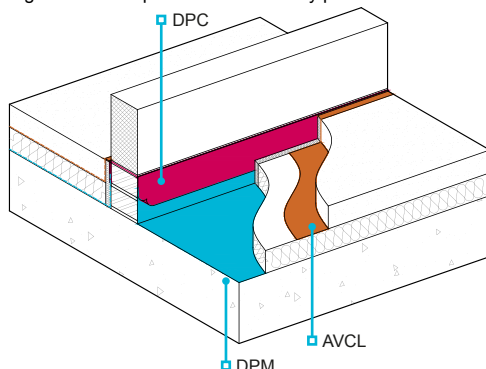
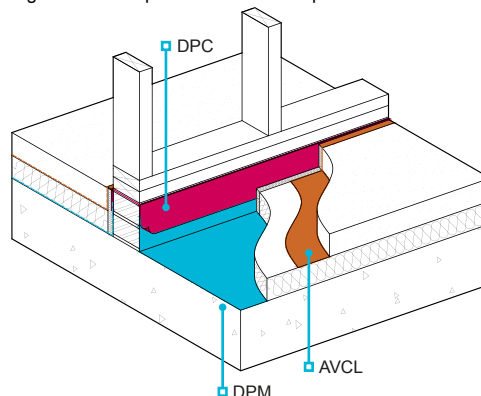


Figure 24: DPC provision — framed partition



Where steps are necessary in the ground floor slab, a DPC should be:

- incorporated as a continuous link between the upper and lower DPM
- protected from damage during construction.

Where steps are greater than 150mm, structural waterproofing should be provided in accordance with Chapter 5.4 Waterproofing of basements and other below ground structures.

Materials acceptable for DPCs include:

Bitumen based materials	BS 6398, BS EN 14967
Polyethylene	BS 6515
Thermoplastics and elastomers	BS EN 14909
Proprietary materials	Technical Requirement R3

6.3.14 Components

Wall ties and related items shall be of the appropriate type and strength and shall have adequate durability.

Joist hangers, restraint straps, bond ties, etc should be protected against corrosion. Ferrous metals with the following levels of protection are acceptable:

- post-galvanizing to BS EN ISO 1461, or
- pre-galvanizing to BS EN 10143.

6.3.15 Further information

- *BS 8000-8 Workmanship on construction sites — Design and installation of dry lining systems. Code of practice*

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