

03 BRMCA GUIDE BS EN 13791:2019, Clause 9

Assessment of compressive strength class of concrete in case of doubt

Assessment of compressive strength class of recently supplied concrete using in-situ core testing

1. Introduction

There are times when it is considered necessary to assess the compressive strength class of recently supplied concrete.

This document should not be used where the supplier has a low level of quality assurance or no documented procedures. Ideally the supplier should be certified to supply concrete to BS EN 206 and BS 8500-2 to either the Quality Scheme for Ready-Mixed Concrete, QSRMC, or BSI Kitemark Scheme for Ready-Mixed Concrete.

2. Planning and testing

A useful first stage is to try and establish from the site and delivery documentation the areas where the concrete deliveries of concern were delivered and placed, and areas where the same concrete has been placed for which there is no concern. The next stage is to divide the total area for investigation into regions and volumes as trying to assess too large an area without a sufficient number of tests will result in an invalid assessment. It will also be useful to complete a visual survey with all parties involved to ensure that any proposed testing locations are both representative and accessible.

In accordance with BS EN 13791, the concrete under investigation shall be divided into regions where each region is for no more than 180 m³ of concrete. Each region shall be further divided into 1 to 6 volumes, where each volume is no more than around 30 m³ of concrete.

The division of a region into volumes may be done by simple division into equal volumes. It may be that after consideration of the delivery documentation and site records, including the review of site cube results, it is possible to identify areas of concrete within the region of particular concern where it would be sensible to ensure these are treated as discrete volumes. Where around 30 m³ of concrete or less is under consideration then the region is a single volume, but where around 30 m³ of concrete or less is placed over more than one day then each day's concrete is a separate volume.

3. Coring

Coring is in accordance with BS EN 12504-1 and the additional requirements set out in BS EN 13791, that is cores shall be ≥ 75 mm diameter and coring not undertaken at a maturity less than 28 day at 20 °C. The minimum number of cores and assessment criteria are set out in Table 1. Where testing by coring it is important to record the location of any reinforcement to ensure the volume of reinforcement in 1:1 cores is not more than 2.0 %, and in 2:1 cores that the reinforcement is completely within 30 mm of the ends of the core and the volume fraction of reinforcement is not more than 2.0 %. It is also important to carry out any initial assessment of the results and investigate any potential outliers. As suggested by the Standard, statistical outliers can be identified by the application of the Grubb test where there are four or more results, or for three results by checking that the spread of results is not greater than 15% of the mean value. Subject to confirmation of valid results where they satisfy the assessment criteria then the specified characteristic strength has been supplied.

Table 1. Summary of minimum core requirements and assessment criteria for a region of concrete^{A)} up to 180 m³.

Number of volumes, all < 30 m ³	Minimum number of 1:1 ^{B)} cores for each volume	Minimum total number of 1:1 ^{B)} cores for region	Assessment criteria ^{C)} Note: Both criteria need to be satisfied for the acceptance of conformity of compressive strength.	
			Mean of all core results from the region from the volume:	Lowest core result
1 ^{D)}	3	3	–	≥0.85($f_{ck, spec, cube} - 4^E)$)
2	2	4	≥0.85($f_{ck, spec, cube} + 1$)	
3	2	6		
4	2	8		
5	2	10	≥0.85($f_{ck, spec, cube} + 2$)	
6	2	12		

A) Requirements where the concrete producer has product conformity certification.
 B) Where the core diameter is ≥75 mm and the length/diameter ratio from 0.90 to 1.10.
 C) $f_{ck, spec, cube}$ = specified characteristic cube strength. '0.85' = EN 1992-1-1 factor that accounts for the difference between the design strength obtained by testing specimens taken from a finished structure or element and the value based on standard test specimens.
 D) Only where the 30 m³ is supplied in one day. Where the concrete is supplied over two or more days then each day's volume shall be considered a different volume.
 E) For specified strength C16/20 the constant is reduced to 3, for specified strength C12/15 the constant is reduced to 2, and for specified strength C8/10 the constant is reduced to 1.

STANDARDS

BS EN 206	Concrete – Specification, performance, production and conformity
BS EN 1992-1-1	Eurocode 2: Design of concrete structures – Part 1-1: General rules and rules for buildings
BS EN 12504-1	Testing concrete in structures – Part 1: Cored specimens - Taking, examining and testing in compression
BS EN 13791	Assessment of in-situ compressive strength in structures and precast concrete components
BS 8500-2	Concrete – Complementary British Standard to EN 206. Part 2: Specification for constituent materials and concrete

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