

# NHBRC Test Questions & Answers PDF

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**1) The Geo-technical solution shall be designed by a ..... Engineer?**

- a) Structural Engineer
- b) Civil Engineer
- c) Geo – Technical Engineer
- d) NHBRC Competent Person

**Correct Answer:**

Geo – Technical Engineer

**Explanation:**

Geotechnical solutions address the interaction between a structure and the soil or rock supporting it. This includes evaluating bearing capacity, settlement behaviour, collapsible or expansive soils, groundwater conditions, and dolomitic risk. A Geotechnical Engineer is trained and registered to interpret soil investigation results and to design foundation solutions that safely accommodate these ground conditions. Assigning this responsibility ensures that foundation designs are based on proper geotechnical principles and reduces the likelihood of soil-related structural failures.

*Reference: SANS 10400-H, Foundations, Page 5*

**2) What is the importance of a DPC?**

- a) To prevent mist & fog into the house
- b) To allow moisture penetration
- c) To prevent rising damp through walls
- d) All of the above

**Correct Answer:**

To prevent rising damp through walls

**Explanation:**

A Damp Proof Course (DPC) is a continuous impermeable barrier installed within masonry walls to stop ground moisture from rising upward through capillary action. Masonry materials such as bricks and mortar are porous, allowing moisture from the soil to migrate upward if no barrier is present. Rising damp carries salts that crystallise within plaster and brickwork, leading to peeling paint, efflorescence, mould growth, and progressive weakening of the wall structure. By interrupting this moisture movement, the DPC protects structural durability, internal finishes, indoor air quality, and ensures long-term compliance with NHBRC moisture control requirements.

*Reference: SANS 10400-C & SANS 10400-K*

**3) Cement bricks and clay bricks can be mixed in masonry construction?**

- a) True
- b) False
- c) If wetted
- d) None of the above

**Correct Answer:**

False

**Explanation:**

Cement bricks and clay bricks have different rates of moisture movement, thermal expansion, and strength. When mixed in the same wall, these differences lead to uneven movement, cracking along

interfaces, and loss of structural integrity. NHBRC standards therefore prohibit mixing to maintain uniform wall behaviour.

*Reference: SANS 2001-CM1, Page 22, Par 4.3.7*

**4) In hollow bricks used for cavity wall foundations, what should the grading of mortar be?**

- a) 3.0 Mpa & 10.0 Mpa
- b) 3.0 Mpa & 7.0 Mpa
- c) 1.0 Mpa & 10.0 Mpa
- d) None of the above

**Correct Answer:**

3.0 Mpa & 7.0 Mpa

**Explanation:**

Different mortar strengths are specified to ensure compatibility between masonry units and mortar. A lower-strength mortar accommodates minor movement while the higher-strength mortar provides sufficient load-bearing capacity. This balance prevents cracking and ensures durability in cavity wall foundations.

*Reference: SANS 10400-K, Page 10, Par 4.2.1.1 (a4)*

**5) What are the minimum dimensions of a wall plate supporting the tie beam & rafters?**

- a) 38 x 114 x 76mm
- b) 40 x 120 x 80mm
- c) 60 x 100 x 100mm
- d) 60 x 120 x 80mm

**Correct Answer:**

38 x 114 x 76mm

**Explanation:**

A wall plate is a critical structural timber member that distributes loads from roof trusses, rafters, and tie beams evenly onto masonry walls. The specified minimum dimensions ensure adequate bearing area, prevent crushing of masonry, and allow sufficient fixing for anchors and tie-down straps. If wall plates are undersized, loads become concentrated, leading to cracking of masonry, timber splitting, uplift failure under wind loads, and potential roof instability.

*Reference: SANS 10400-L*