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WORKED EXAMPLE: RISK ASSESSMENT AND METHOD STATEMENT

Building a garden wall in blockwork and facing brick

Hollins & Reed Brickwork Ltd · 12 to 15 October 2026 · In charge: Dan Hollins

Worked example. Change it to fit your job before you use it.

Job details

Company	Hollins & Reed Brickwork Ltd
Site and work area	31 Ash Grove, Altrincham WA14 2RL: rear garden
Planned dates	12 to 15 October 2026
Customer	Mr and Mrs Grant
In charge on site	Dan Hollins
Team	Three people: Dan Hollins leads, lays and is the first aider; Priya Shah lays and is his deputy; Tom Reed mixes, cuts and barrows.
Work	Building a garden wall in blockwork and facing brick
Prepared by	Dan Hollins
Signature	
Date	

Work and boundaries

Build a blockwork and facing brick garden wall from the ground. Areas: Rear garden wall between the patio and the lawn

Not our work:

- The foundation, the patio, the lawn and the boundary fences. Nothing is dug and nothing is built off the house.

Working arrangement

- Access: the floor or ground.
- Dust control when cutting: Water on the blade.
- The work area will be kept clear of other people.

- The Grants are at home. The back garden is closed to them and their dog while we work, and they use the front door. We use their cloakroom toilet and basin. The wall runs across the garden between the patio and the lawn, on their land and away from every boundary. The drawing shows it 5 m long, 215 mm thick and 1 m high above the lawn including the coping, under the 1,075 mm limit for a one-brick wall in the most exposed zone, so no piers and no engineer. It tops out at 1 m, so it is laid from the ground with no trestle or hop-up. It is English garden wall bond in F2 facing bricks with a brick-on-edge coping on a damp proof course and one movement joint in the coping at the middle. The customer's groundworker poured the foundation on 5 October 2026, 650 mm wide and down to 650 mm, with its top 225 mm below the lawn. The customer's groundworker fills both sides once the wall has set. Until then the slots stay boarded. No pipe or cable crossed the open trench. The packs come on to the drive, and everything goes through the side gate by barrow on boards. Materials: 12 aircrete blocks at 16 kg, about 600 facing bricks at about 2.3 kg and 36 bags of Cemex M12 mortar at 25 kg, each mix used within 120 minutes. The mixer stands on the patio and it and the cutter run from a 110 V transformer in the garage. Washings go into a tub beside the mixer, and the settled solids, offcuts and packaging leave in our van.

Emergency arrangements

Priya Shah rings 999 and gives 31 Ash Grove, WA14 2RL; Dan Hollins does if Priya is the one hurt. Dan is the first aider and the kit is in the van on the drive, and an eyewash bottle stands by the mixer. Whoever is nearest stays with the casualty, and Tom Reed goes to the front and brings the crew through the side gate, kept unlocked and clear. Mortar in the eye: wash it out with clean water straight away, keep washing, and get to A&E. Wet mortar trapped on the skin: wash it off at once.

Planned method

1. **Set up the work area**
   Confirm the work area and scope before starting. Keep other people outside the active work area. Keep entrances and escape routes clear.

2. **Check the foundation and the wall size**
   Check the concrete has set and matches the drawing for line, width and depth. Check the wall height against the published limit for its thickness in your area. Too tall means piers, a thicker wall or an engineer.

3. **Check the mix before tipping**
   Read the bag, specification or delivery docket before adding anything. Mix only the material and amount approved for the receiving work.

4. **Carry the materials safely**
   Plan the route, clear it, and get help with anything long or heavy. Store materials close to the work so nobody carries further than they need to.

5. **Set down units close to the wall**
   Put packs on firm level ground near the point of use. Keep the route and working area clear before moving the next pack.

6 **Keep the work face tidy**
Keep mortar, tools and units within easy reach without blocking the access route. Clear broken units and mortar before they become trip hazards.

7 **Set up a firm mixing point**
Put the board, tub or mixer on firm level ground with a clear route around it. Keep bags and water where they can be reached without twisting or stepping over leads.

8 **Use premix where the job allows**
Use pre-mixed mortar when it is approved for the work. Keep bags dry and use them before the shelf date.

9 **Control the cement powder**
Tip bags low and steadily into the mixer, standing upwind.

10 **Keep hands out of a mixer**
Set the mixer on firm level ground and check its guard, lead and plug. Switch off and unplug before clearing a jam or cleaning.

11 **Keep wet mortar off your skin**
Wear long-cuffed waterproof gloves and eye protection for all mixing and laying. Trousers go over boots, and kneeling boards stay dry. Wash off any mortar straight away, and wash at the basin at breaks. The COSHH assessment for cement and mortar goes with this method.

12 **Control the dust when cutting**
Never cut dry in the open. Wear an APF 20 mask (FFP3 or P3) when you cut: fit tested and clean-shaven. Keep other people out of the dust.

13 **Wet cutting**
This job is wet cutting: keep water on and collect the slurry.

14 **Use the grinder or disc cutter safely**
Check the disc is the right type and speed for the tool and the material. Keep the guard on and both hands on the tool. Wear impact-rated eye protection.

15 **Limit noise and vibration**
Wear ear defenders when cutting. Note how long each person's hands are on each tool while it runs. Take the tool's vibration figure from the maker or HSE's table and check it fits how you use it. Points per hour times hours on the trigger, added up for the day, gives the exposure: 100 points is the action value, 400 is the limit. HSE's vibration calculator does the sum. Over 100, cut it with lower-vibration kit or less time, and never pass 400. Write the result down. Sharing the work does not replace this. Keep the tools maintained.

16 **Use the specified amount of water**
Measure water and add it as the product instructions say. Do not add water later to revive mortar that has started to set.

17 **Lay the block course from the trench edge**
One course of 215 mm aircrete blocks brings the wall up to lawn level. At 16 kg each they are under the 20 kg line, and there are only 12. Kneel on a board at the edge. Nobody stands in the trench. Cut a block by hand with a masonry saw.

18 Build the wall to the drawing

Build the bond, line and level the drawing shows, and finish with the coping on its damp proof course. Keep any movement joint the drawing shows open and clear of mortar.

19 Keep the fresh wall safe

Do not lean boards, sheets or materials against fresh masonry. Cover the top at the end of each day and whenever rain is due. Stop building if wind makes the wall unsafe.

20 Check the wall before leaving it

Check the last course for line and level and that the cover is tied down. Leave materials where they cannot strike or load the fresh wall. Leave the area taped off until the wall has set, and tell the customer what must stay clear and until when.

21 Wash out at the agreed point

Clean boards, tubs and mixers at the site washout point. Keep cement washings out of drains and clear settled solids as waste.

22 Clear and hand back the area

Remove tools, waste and unused materials. Check the area is clean and ready to use. Tell the customer or whoever runs the site when the work is complete.

Risk assessment

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Controls in place
People entering the work area or tripping over materials Step 1	Workers, occupants and visitors	Mark or barrier the active work area. Store tools and materials away from access routes.
A freestanding wall leans or overturns when it is too tall for its thickness or stands on the wrong foundation Step 2	Bricklayers and anyone who later stands near the wall	Stop if the foundation or the height is not what the drawing shows. Set out on the concrete before any block comes off the pack.
Wrong material or excess water causing weak work or an unexpected chemical exposure Step 3	The mixer and the people using the mortar	Keep the current product information at the mixing point. Stop if the bag, docket or receiving work does not match.
Back and shoulder injury from carrying heavy or long items Step 4	Everyone handling materials	Use a trolley or sack truck on the flat where the load suits one.

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Controls in place
Strains, trips and falling packs while bricks or blocks are moved around the site Step 5	Bricklayers, labourers and people using the route	Use pallet trucks or sack trucks where possible. Keep packs stable and do not double stack unless the site arrangement allows it.
Trips or strains while working around scattered materials Step 6	The bricklaying team and people using the route	Use a stable board or tub for mortar. Move empty pallets and waste out of the work face promptly.
A mixer tips, or people trip and strain while preparing mortar Step 7	The mixer and people working nearby	Keep leads and hoses out of walkways. Move bags with a trolley or team carry where needed.
Unnecessary powder exposure and skin contact from making a mix that could be supplied wet Step 8	Mixers and labourers	Choose the approved premix with the supervisor. Do not substitute a different material without checking the specification.
Breathing cement powder and getting alkaline material in the eyes or on skin Step 9	The person mixing and people at the mixing point	Wear the APF 20 mask, eye protection and gloves to tip bags. Keep others away while powder is tipped.
Hands, clothing or arms caught in a paddle or drum; electric shock Step 10	The mixer operator and people nearby	Never reach into a running mixer. Take damaged equipment out of use and use the agreed electrical supply.
Burns and dermatitis from wet mortar trapped on the skin; mortar in the eye Step 11	Everyone mixing or laying	Waterproof gloves, eye protection and washing at each break. Eyewash by the mixer.
Silica and board dust from power cutting damage the lungs Step 12	The person cutting and anyone downwind	Use the kit that fits the tool. Cut in one place, away from other trades. Collect any slurry while it is wet. Clear any dry dust with an H or M Class vacuum, not a brush.
Silica dust if the water stops, and slipping on slurry Step 13	The person cutting and anyone nearby	Stop cutting if the water stops.

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Controls in place
A disc bursts or the tool kicks back and cuts the user Step 14	The person cutting	Only someone trained to change discs fits them. Stop and swap any cracked or worn disc.
Hearing damage and hand-arm vibration from power tools Step 15	The person cutting	Use sharp blades and discs, which cut faster with less vibration. Warn people nearby before you start cutting.
Weak mortar or cement contact from an uncontrolled mix Step 16	The mixer and the people using the mortar	Keep the product instructions at the mixing point. Discard material that is outside its stated working time.
Back strain from low work, and stepping into the trench Step 17	The bricklayers	Stack within reach to avoid twisting. Swap with the barrow work at breaks. Board the trench edge.
A wall that fails later from the wrong bond, mortar or coping Step 18	Bricklayers and anyone who later stands near the wall	Check line, level and gauge as you go. Use the mortar class the drawing gives, and set the mortar board at a comfortable height.
A fresh wall being knocked over before the mortar sets Step 19	Bricklayers and everyone near the wall	Keep people away from the wall until it has set. Stop building if wind makes the wall unsafe.
An unfinished wall is damaged or pushed over before it has set Step 20	The bricklaying team and the people at the house	Tell the customer what must stay clear and until when. Leave the area taped off until the wall has set.
Cement burns, slippery slurry and blocked or polluted drains Step 21	Mixers, labourers and people using the area	Agree the washout point before mixing. Wear waterproof gloves and eye protection while washing out.
Debris, tools or unfinished work left in the area Step 22	Workers, occupants and visitors	Remove waste by the agreed route. Record and protect any unfinished work.