

Masonry bed joint reinforcement

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Question

Where bed joint reinforcement is used in a masonry wall does this reduce the need for movement joints?

Considerations

- The extent to which a masonry wall is likely to crack due to movement depends on a variety of factors, including:
 - the length of the wall
 - the length to height ratio of the wall panel
 - the position and size of openings in the wall

Movement joints are provided to control movement and reduce cracking.

- Bed joint reinforcement can be provided to accommodate stresses in certain critical locations, e.g. under window openings. It is normally provided in addition to and not instead of movement joints. PD 6697 - Recommendations for the design of masonry structures to BS EN 1996-1-1 and BS EN 1996-2 gives guidance on movement joints and bed joint reinforcement.
- Where bed joint reinforcement is used to reduce the number of movement joints or increase spacings between joints, the design should be in accordance with PD 6697.

Answer

The provision of bed joint reinforcement will not generally reduce the need for movement joints. If movement joint spacings are to be increased, walls should be designed by an engineer in accordance with PD 6697 and manufacturers recommendation.