



CONCRETE BLOCK FAQ

What is a concrete block?

A concrete block, also known as a Concrete Masonry Unit (CMU), is a manufactured building product made from cement, aggregates, and water. Concrete blocks are used in residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional construction because they provide excellent strength, durability, and fire resistance.

What is the difference between a concrete block and a cinder block?

Although many people use the terms interchangeably, modern concrete blocks are manufactured using cement and aggregates. Traditional cinder blocks contained coal cinders as part of the aggregate mix and are rarely produced today. Most "cinder blocks" sold today are actually concrete masonry units (CMUs).

What sizes of concrete block does Brown's manufacture?

Brown's manufactures concrete blocks in widths ranging from 90 mm to 290 mm, with standard units measuring 390 mm long by 190 mm high. Specialized shapes including bond beam, corner, knockout, bullnose, ashlar, and solid units are also available.

What block size should I use?

The appropriate block depends on your project requirements:

- 90 mm block: partitions and non-load-bearing walls
- 140 mm block: residential and light commercial applications
- 190 mm block: standard structural walls
- 240 mm and 290 mm block: heavy-duty structural and retaining applications

Consult your engineer or designer for structural applications.

Are concrete blocks load-bearing?

Yes. Many concrete block walls are designed as load-bearing structures capable of supporting floors, roofs, and other building loads when properly designed and constructed.

What is a bond beam block?

A bond beam block is a specialized block with an open channel designed to accommodate horizontal reinforcing steel and grout. Bond beams help strengthen masonry walls and improve structural performance. Brown's manufactures bond beam units in several sizes.



What is a knockout block?

Knockout blocks contain removable sections that allow for horizontal reinforcement and grouting. They are commonly used in reinforced masonry construction.

Are concrete block walls fire resistant?

Yes. Concrete masonry is non-combustible and provides excellent fire resistance. Brown's 60% Solid block carries a 2-hour fire rating, making it suitable for many fire-rated wall assemblies.

Can concrete block walls be reinforced?

Yes. Concrete block walls can be reinforced with steel reinforcing bars and grout to significantly increase strength and resistance to wind, soil pressure, and structural loads.

How long do concrete block buildings last?

Concrete block structures can last well over 100 years when properly designed, constructed, and maintained. Concrete masonry is resistant to rot, insects, and weathering.

Do concrete blocks perform well in Northern Ontario?

Yes. Concrete block is particularly well suited to Northern Ontario's climate because it is durable, non-combustible, resistant to insects, and capable of withstanding freeze-thaw conditions when properly installed.

How many blocks are on a pallet?

The number varies depending on the block size and style. Contact Brown's sales team for current pallet quantities and weights for your specific block selection.

How much does a concrete block weigh?

Weights vary by size and type. Brown's standard blocks range from approximately 12 kg for a 90 mm unit to 25 kg for a 290 mm unit. Solid and specialty units may weigh more.



Can concrete block be painted?

Yes. Concrete block can be painted using masonry-compatible coatings after the wall has fully cured and dried.

Can concrete block get wet?

Yes. Concrete block is designed for exterior exposure. Proper detailing, flashing, drainage, and waterproofing should be incorporated where required.

What causes white staining on concrete block?

White staining, known as efflorescence, occurs when water carries natural salts to the surface of the masonry. It is a cosmetic condition and does not affect the structural integrity of the block.

What mortar should I use with concrete block?

The mortar type depends on the application and structural requirements. Common masonry mortars include Type S and Type N. Brown's recommends following project specifications and applicable building codes.

Can I cut concrete blocks?

Yes. Concrete blocks can be cut using masonry saws equipped with diamond blades. Appropriate safety equipment should always be used.

Why choose Brown's concrete block?

Brown's has been manufacturing concrete products in Northern Ontario for decades and produces a complete range of standard and specialty concrete masonry units. Our products are designed to meet the needs of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional projects throughout Ontario.



LEARN MORE

For product information, technical support, and project assistance, contact:

Brown's Concrete Products Ltd.

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