

Discolouration of Masonry due to Saturation

The effects of saturation of absorbent materials can be aesthetically disconcerting if not properly understood.

Discolouration or darkening can appear during various stages of construction, usually after rainfall, and can affect specific areas or random patches dependant on the circumstances or absorbency of the masonry unit.

Many materials used in construction are porous to a lesser or greater degree, whether it be stone, concrete, brick, mortar etc. This should be allowed for in design and detailing of buildings. Other materials such as glass, metals and plastics etc, are not absorbent and water will readily run off these components onto adjacent materials.

During rainfall, saturation of masonry can be intensified by other components, for example rain-water outlets prior to the down-pipes being fitted or scaffolding boards adjacent to freshly constructed masonry.

The after effects will be localised darkened patches.

With brickwork, mortar takes at least a month to reach its optimum strength and hardness and the structure will need some care and consideration until then. Therefore it is likely that water can penetrate readily and saturate units whilst the building is in an unfinished state.

As with any absorbent material, **it will take time to dry out thoroughly** and this will be governed largely on the time of year construction takes place and by the amount of protection afforded during the building process.

Good site practice and protection of newly laid masonry from rainfall can minimise saturation which could also trigger efflorescence or lime leeching from mortar or concrete components.



Darkened areas due to saturation



Saturation caused by missing guttering



Remember:

- Turn back scaffolding boards to stop rain splashing onto brickwork.
- Hessian is not a waterproof covering.
- Protect stacks of unused materials from rainfall at all times.

For further help and information contact the Design & Technical Helpline on **0844 800 4576** or email **technical@ibstock.co.uk**