

# Heavy Masonry Units – Contract Design Stage

## The Problem / Challenge

To eliminate Musculo-Skeletal injuries in the construction industry as a result of repetitive handling of heavy masonry units requiring a fundamental major change in attitudes throughout the industry.

## The Risks

Lifelong musculo-skeletal injuries to operatives and loss of skilled workforce.



*Traditional Approach*



*Weight of Units Significant*



*Mechanised Approach*

## The Solution for Designers - NBS Specification Clause 13.2

Apart from general construction hazards, such as working from scaffolding, the main risks associated with brick/ block walling are manual handling: The Construction Industry Advisory Committee (CONIAC) has concluded that there is a high risk of injury in the singlehanded, repetitive manual lifting of building blocks heavier than 20 kg, and this should be taken into account before specifying heavy units. For detailed CONIAC guidance see [HSE Construction sheet number 37](#)

## The Solution for Designers

Change in traditional **manhandling** attitudes to use mechanical aides or less heavy units whilst being competitive in the marketplace.

## The Benefits

Retaining a skilled workforce long term by showing respect for their health and welfare.

## Key Points

- Work with the stakeholders to jointly develop an approach to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injury on all projects.
- Safeguard the health of individuals working with boards by mechanical aides or good lifting practices.
- Designers can help by identifying heavy units that are required in the design and request appropriate lifting proposals in the Tender & Construction Phase Plan.

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