

TOOLBOX TALK: MASONRY WALLS

Job or site _____

Date _____

Led by _____

Open with this

How tall is the wall going up today? Add four feet to that number and hold it, because that is the distance we are about to talk about.

The talk

There is one rule in this standard that most masons have never heard said out loud, and it is a distance. A limited access zone shall be established whenever a masonry wall is being constructed. Whenever. Not on tall walls, not on windy days. Whenever.

The zone shall be equal to the height of the wall to be constructed plus four feet, and shall run the entire length of the wall. So a ten foot wall gets a fourteen foot zone, end to end. Not a cone at the corner. A strip the whole length of the work.

It goes on the side of the wall which will be unscaffolded, which is the side nobody is standing on and therefore the side nobody thinks about. That is deliberate. An unbraced wall falls the way nothing is holding it, and the standard puts the empty strip exactly there.

It gets established prior to the start of construction of the wall, not once the wall is tall enough to worry about. Before the first course.

And it is restricted to entry by employees actively engaged in constructing the wall. No other employees shall be permitted to enter the zone. That is everyone else on this site: the laborer fetching block, the electrician running a cable, the man walking through because it is the short way.

The zone stays until the wall is adequately supported to prevent overturning and to prevent collapse. For a wall over eight feet, it stays until the bracing requirement has been met, which is a separate and harder test.

All masonry walls over eight feet in height shall be adequately braced to prevent overturning and to prevent collapse, unless the wall is adequately supported so that it will not overturn or collapse. And the bracing shall remain in place until permanent supporting elements of the structure are in place.

Until the permanent supports are in. Not until the mortar has gone off, not until it looks solid, not until the end of the shift. A green wall braced on Friday and stripped on Monday because the bracing was in the way is the exact scenario the last sentence of this standard was written to stop.

Point at these before anybody starts

- The height of the wall going up, plus four feet, paced out on the unscaffolded side.
- Whether that strip is actually marked, or whether it exists only in a conversation.
- Every trade whose route to work crosses it, and whether anybody has told them.
- Any material, mixer, cart or generator stored inside the zone.
- Every wall over eight feet already standing, and whether its bracing is still there.
- Wind. A partly built wall on an open site is a sail with nothing behind it.

The rules that apply

- A limited access zone shall be established whenever a masonry wall is being constructed, prior to the start of construction of the wall.
- The limited access zone shall be equal to the height of the wall to be constructed plus four feet, shall run the entire length of the wall, and shall be established on the side of the wall which will be unscaffolded.
- The limited access zone shall be restricted to entry by employees actively engaged in constructing the wall. No other employees shall be permitted to enter the zone.
- The zone shall remain in place until the wall is adequately supported to prevent overturning and collapse, and where the wall is over eight feet, until the bracing requirement has been met.
- All masonry walls over eight feet in height shall be adequately braced to prevent overturning and collapse unless adequately supported, and the bracing shall remain in place until permanent supporting elements of the structure are in place.

Ask the crew

- How wide is the zone for the wall we are building, and which side does it go on?
- Who is allowed inside it?
- When can the bracing come off a nine foot wall?

Close with this

Height plus four, the whole length, the empty side. Then nobody is standing where it lands.

Attendance

Everybody who was present signs, including subcontractors and anybody visiting the site.

	Print name and signature
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This talk is general safety information for a crew briefing, not legal advice and not a substitute for the training your employees are required to have. Standards are quoted for orientation only. Check the current text of the standard and your own state plan, which may be stricter than the federal rule.