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# Buildings and civil engineering works — Vocabulary —

## Part 1: General terms

*Bâtiments et ouvrages de génie civil — Vocabulaire —*

*Partie 1: Termes généraux*

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# Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

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For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 59, *Buildings and civil engineering works*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Terminology and harmonization of languages*.

This fifth edition cancels and replaces the fourth edition (ISO 6707-1:2014), which has been technically revised. It also incorporates and revises ISO 2444:1988, which is therefore cancelled.

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

— substantial changes in the definitions of majority of the terms have been made;

— some terms and definitions from ISO 2444 (modified where necessary) have been incorporated;

— entries have been renumbered so that all terms and definitions are in Clause 3;

— the indicator for national terms, e.g. US, has been moved from before to after the term;

— GB-admitted (non-preferred) terms have been assigned to appropriate entries, rather than given in an annex;

— certain terms have been moved to ISO 6707-2, where appropriate;

— a nucleus of modular coordination terms from ISO 1791:1983 have been added.

A list of all parts in the ISO 6707 series can be found on the ISO website.


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# Introduction

With the growth in the number of international construction projects and the development of the international market for construction products, there is an increasing need for agreement on a common language in the domain.

This document is a first step toward a complete set of general terms for use by the construction industry. It will be updated as further terms and definitions are agreed upon.

This document includes terms and concepts that are commonly used in documentation governing construction work, as well as terms used to specify products and works. It is important to note that when used in legislation, some general construction terms have a narrower interpretation and hence, the definition given in this document will not apply.

The adoption of this document by the various national construction industries will improve communication in the design, execution, and maintenance of construction works within those industries. Its use in other standards will aid harmonization and provide a basis for specialist terminology.

**Structure of this document**

Entries are presented under convenient headings. The terms are arranged within categories to allow ready comparison of related concepts.

International preferred terms are listed in **boldface type**. Where a preferred term is specific to a particular English-speaking country, e.g. the United States of America, etc., it is given below the international preferred term and is annotated with the respective country code. Where no preferred terms are listed indicating usage in a specific geographical location, this signifies that the international preferred term is the accepted term in English-speaking countries. A term beneath the preferred term(s) not given in boldface type is an admitted (non-preferred) synonym. A country code is assigned to an admitted term if it is specific to an English speaking country.

Where the international term is not used in the US or Canada, five dots (.....) are placed where the US term would normally appear.

In most countries, synonyms and alternative spellings exist for the international preferred terms used in this document. US synonyms and alternative spellings are given in Annex A.

Where a given preferred term designates more than one concept, each concept has been treated in a separate entry and a note to entry included to indicate that a homograph exists and to provide a reference to the other term entry.

Where terms are used in definitions to designate concepts that are defined elsewhere in this document, the relevant terms are presented in *italics* and the term number is given after the relevant term.

To facilitate the locating of any term given in the document, irrespective of preference or country of origin, the alphabetical index lists all preferred and admitted terms.

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# Buildings and civil engineering works — Vocabulary —

# Part 1: General terms

## 1 Scope

This document contains the terms and definitions of general concepts to establish a vocabulary applicable to buildings and civil engineering works.

It comprises:

a) fundamental concepts, which can be the starting point for other, more specific, definitions;

b) more specific concepts, used in several areas of construction and frequently used in standards, regulations and contracts.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— IEC Electropedia: available at http://www.electropedia.org/

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at http://www.iso.org/obp

### 3.1 Terms relating to types of buildings and civil engineering works

#### 3.1.1 Base terms

**3.1.1.1**
**construction works**
**construction, US**
everything that is constructed or results from construction operations

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there are homographs for the term “construction”. See 3.3.5.6 and 3.5.1.1.

**3.1.1.2**
**civil engineering works**
**civil engineering project, US**
*construction works* (3.1.1.1) comprising a *structure* (3.1.1.4), such as a *dam* (3.1.2.22), *bridge* (3.1.3.19), *road* (3.1.3.1), *railway* (3.1.3.3), runway, utilities, *pipeline* (3.1.2.30), or *sewerage system* (3.3.4.40), or the result of operations such as dredging, *earthwork* (3.5.1.6), geotechnical *processes* (3.5.2.3), but excluding a *building* (3.1.1.3) and its associated *site* (3.1.1.6) works

Note 1 to entry: Associated siteworks are excluded except that in US civil engineering projects, they are included.

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**3.1.1.3**
**building**
*construction works* (3.1.1.1) that has the provision of shelter for its occupants or contents as one of its main purposes, usually partially or totally enclosed and designed to stand permanently in one place

Note 1 to entry: There is a homograph for the term "building". See 3.5.1.4.

**3.1.1.4**
**structure**
*construction works* (3.1.1.1) having a *structure* (3.3.1.2)

Note 1 to entry: There is a homograph for the term "structure". See 3.3.1.2.

**3.1.1.5**
**external works**
**sitework, US**
*construction works* (3.1.1.1) or landscape work on *land* (3.8.1) associated with, and adjacent to, *civil engineering works* (3.1.1.2) or a *building* (3.1.1.3)

**3.1.1.6**
**site**
area of *land* (3.8.1) or water where *construction work* (3.5.1.1) or other development is undertaken

### 3.1.2 Civil engineering works

**3.1.2.1**
**earthworks**
result of change of terrain

**3.1.2.2**
**excavation**
result of digging, lifting, and removing earth, *fill* (3.4.4.9), or other *material* (3.4.1.2) from the *ground* (3.4.2.1)

**3.1.2.3**
**embankment**
section of *earthworks* (3.1.2.1), often formed by *cut* (3.1.2.5) or *fill* (3.4.4.9), where the *finished ground level* (3.7.2.68) is above or below original *ground level* (3.7.2.67) and whose *length* (3.7.2.10) usually greatly exceeds its *width* (3.7.2.8)

**3.1.2.4**
**bund**
**berm, US**
low *embankment* (3.1.2.3)

**3.1.2.5**
**cut**
*material* (3.4.1.2) excavated in bulk

Note 1 to entry: There is a homograph for the term "cut". See 3.1.2.6.

**3.1.2.6**
**cut**
void that results from bulk *excavation* (3.1.2.2) of *material* (3.4.1.2)

Note 1 to entry: There is a homograph for the term "cut". See 3.1.2.5.


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**3.1.2.7**
**cut and fill**
*earthwork* (3.5.1.6) technique for lessening or increasing a variation in *ground level* (3.7.2.67) by using *material* (3.4.1.2) excavated from higher *ground* (3.4.2.1) to raise the *level* (3.7.2.39) of lower ground or the reverse

**3.1.2.8**
**adit**
nearly level *tunnel* (3.1.3.18) driven to underground workings

**3.1.2.9**
**made ground**
**fill, US**
*ground* (3.4.2.1) that has been formed by using *material* (3.4.1.2) to fill in a depression or to raise the *level* (3.7.2.39) of a *site* (3.1.1.6)

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term "fill". See 3.4.4.9.

**3.1.2.10**
**bund wall**
**retaining earthworks, US**
*wall* (3.3.2.46) that forms an enclosure around a storage tank and is used to retain the contents in the event of tank failure

**3.1.2.11**
**dumpling**
**mound, US**
large mass of *ground* (3.4.2.1) intended to be excavated but temporarily left as a support during *construction work* (3.5.1.1)

**3.1.2.12**
**trench**
horizontal or slightly inclined long, narrow open *excavation* (3.1.2.2), usually with vertical sides

**3.1.2.13**
**shaft**
vertical or steeply inclined *excavation* (3.1.2.2), usually of limited cross-section in relation to its *depth* (3.7.2.7)

**3.1.2.14**
**borrow pit**
area within which *earthwork* (3.5.1.6) takes place in order to produce *material* (3.4.1.1) for *earthworks* (3.1.2.1)

**3.1.2.15**
**borehole**
hole, usually vertical, bored to determine *ground* (3.4.2.1) conditions, for extraction of water, other liquids, or gases, or *measurement* (3.5.1.22) of groundwater *level* (3.7.2.39)

**3.1.2.16**
**retaining wall**
*wall* (3.3.2.46) that provides lateral support to the *ground* (3.4.2.1) or that resists pressure from a mass of other *material* (3.4.1.2)

**3.1.2.17**
**diaphragm wall**
*wall* (3.3.2.46) made of *concrete* (3.4.4.15) constructed in a *trench* (3.1.2.12) temporarily supported by *bentonite* (3.1.2.18) suspension

Note 1 to entry: There is a homograph for the term "diaphragm wall". See 3.3.1.63.

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Note 2 to entry: In the US, there are homographs for the term "diaphragm wall". See 3.3.1.61 and 3.3.1.63.

**3.1.2.18**
**bentonite**
clay formed by the decomposition of volcanic ash swelling as it absorbs water

**3.1.2.19**
**water tower**
*civil engineering works* (3.1.1.2) that comprise a large water tank raised above *ground level* (3.7.2.67)

**3.1.2.20**
**silo**
*structure* (3.1.1.4) for the storage of a large volume of loose material

**3.1.2.21**
**breakwater**
mole, GB
long *structure* (3.1.1.4) in a body of water designed to protect a *basin* (3.1.3.64) or the shore from waves

**3.1.2.22**
**dam**
*barrier* (3.3.2.9) constructed to retain water in order to raise its *level* (3.7.2.39), form a *reservoir* (3.1.2.36), or reduce or prevent flooding

**3.1.2.23**
**flood bank**
dyke, GB
dike, GB
levee, GB
*embankment* (3.1.2.3) built up to retain or control the *level* (3.7.2.39) of flood water

**3.1.2.24**
**cofferdam**
*structure* (3.1.1.4), usually temporary, that is built to support the surrounding *ground* (3.4.2.1) or to exclude water or *soil* (3.4.2.2) sufficiently to permit work within it to proceed safely without excessive pumping

**3.1.2.25**
**swale**
slightly inclined, often heavily vegetated or paved with gravel, stone (3.4.2.4), or *concrete* (3.4.4.15) and at times swampy, depression, constructed to contain water and other liquids

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term "swale". See 3.8.8.

**3.1.2.26**
**irrigation**
artificial distribution of water to *land* (3.8.1), usually for growing crops

**3.1.2.27**
**weir**
*structure* (3.1.1.4) over which water can flow, used to control the upstream water *level* (3.7.2.39) in a *watercourse* (3.8.8) or other *channel* (3.3.4.16), and/or to measure the *flow* (3.7.3.41)

**3.1.2.28**
**penstock**
**lock gate, US**
sluice gate, GB
gate, usually rectangular, that moves vertically between guides


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