

CONCRETE CHATS

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Concrete Jointing

Joints in concrete pavements and floors have been described in various conversations as an element receiving a relatively small amount of focus during design as well as being an element that can contribute to a large number of headaches. Concrete joints identify the meeting point of two separate concrete panels, provide a controlled location for cracks to turn one slab into two, and act to isolate slabs from structural elements, or other slabs, that behave differently. There are three common types of concrete joints.

Construction Joints: Construction joints are located between separate concrete pours and are not limited to concrete slabs or pavements. Construction joints can also occur between walls and floors, two walls, or other distinct concrete elements. Location of construction joints can depend on several factors including, but not limited to, structure type and function. In exterior paving slabs, the construction schedule can also play a role in location of construction joints.

Control (Contraction) Joints: As concrete sets, it shrinks and moves. If that movement is restrained, most frequently by the material on which it is poured, cracks form to release stress built up by the restraint of movement. Commonly installed by sawcut, contraction joints are used to control where those cracks occur. Sawcuts are typically $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ the depth of the slab and provide “weaker” locations for the release of stresses mentioned above.

Isolation (Expansion) Joints: Isolation joints are placed between concrete elements that move differently. In the case of floors or pavements, for example, these joints will isolate the slab from something that is more rigid, like a wall or foundation element, or from something that moves differently, like pavement intersections with different traffic patterns. Isolation joints include some type of filler material which provided cushion absorbs the slab’s movement without the resistance from the more rigid element and reduces the risk of restraint related cracking.

While load transfer across joints will be covered in a series of upcoming installments, it is important to also remember that each item mentioned above is a non-watertight opening between concrete elements. In addition to load transfer devices, [BoMetals Inc](#) offers a variety of waterstop options to contain liquid in or help prevent intrusion of liquid into your concrete structure.

QuicTip▶ BoMetals PVC and TPER (chemical resistant) products are available for projects where waterstops are built into concrete pours. BoMetals strip-applied waterstops are available for use between distinct and separate concrete pours.

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