

SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS



HOW THE SOIL ON YOUR BLOCK OF LAND WILL DETERMINE THE CONSTRUCTION OF YOUR HOUSE SLAB.

Some blocks of land have very sandy soils, some have a lot of clay, some have rock – the makeup of what’s under the ground has a significant effect on what happens to whatever is built on top of the ground, especially when it rains.

The way soil changes when it comes in contact with moisture is called reactivity. Soils that are sandy and well drained really don’t change when they get wet – they aren’t at all absorbent and the water naturally runs away between the sand particles. However soils that are a mix of sand and clay hold and absorb the moisture. The wetter they get, the more they swell and expand, and once they dry out again they shrink back down.

Testing of the soil on your site will accurately classify the reactivity of the site and determine how strong the slab will need to be to cope with the constant swelling and shrinking of the soil underneath it. This will also prepare you with the expectation that subtle movement within the slab and home will occur, resulting in hairline cracks as a result of the shift in the soil.

Soil Class	Foundation	Characteristic Surface Movement
M	Moderately reactive clay or silt sites, which may experience moderate ground movement from moisture changes.	20-40mm
H1	Highly reactive clay sites, which may experience high ground movement from moisture changes.	40-60mm
H2	Highly reactive clay sites, which may experience very high ground movement from moisture changes.	60-75mm
E	Extremely reactive sites, which may experience extreme ground movement from moisture changes.	>75mm

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