
**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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Contents

Page

Foreword	iv
Introduction	v
1 Scope	1
2 Vocabulary structure	1
3 Types of buildings and civil engineering works	1
3.1 Base terms.....	1
3.2 Civil engineering works.....	2
3.3 Civil engineering works — Transport.....	5
3.4 Buildings.....	12
4 Spaces	14
4.1 Base terms.....	14
4.2 Spaces associated with particular parts of the building.....	14
4.3 Functional spaces.....	16
4.4 Spaces associated with circulation and movement.....	18
5 Parts of buildings and civil engineering works	20
5.1 Structural parts.....	20
5.2 Dividing and enclosing parts.....	28
5.3 Openings and associated closing parts.....	35
5.4 Services, fittings, and equipment.....	39
5.5 Other parts.....	45
6 Materials	53
6.1 Base terms.....	53
6.2 Earth and stone.....	55
6.3 Wood and timber.....	55
6.4 Functional materials.....	59
7 Operations, documentation, and equipment	64
7.1 Operations.....	64
7.2 Documentation.....	70
7.3 Equipment.....	71
8 Persons involved in projects and users	73
9 Characteristics and performance	74
9.1 Base terms.....	74
9.2 Size and dimensions.....	75
9.3 Functional properties.....	78
9.4 Testing properties.....	85
10 Environment and physical planning	86
Annex A (informative) Synonyms and alternative spellings used in Great Britain/United Kingdom (GB)	89
Annex B (informative) Alphabetical index of US synonyms	91
Bibliography	101

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).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: Foreword - Supplementary information

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 59, *Buildings and civil engineering works*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Terminology and harmonization of languages*.

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO 6707-1:2004), which has been technically revised.

ISO 6707 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Buildings and civil engineering works — Vocabulary*:

- *Part 1: General terms*
- *Part 2: Contract terms*

Introduction

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

This part of ISO 6707 is a first step towards 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 International Standard 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 International Standard will not apply.

The adoption of this International Standard 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.

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Buildings and civil engineering works — Vocabulary —

Part 1: General terms

1 Scope

This part of ISO 6707 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, and
- b) more specific concepts, used in several areas of construction and frequently used in standards, regulations, and contracts.

2 Vocabulary structure

The terms are arranged within categories to allow ready comparison of related concepts.

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 acknowledge the homonymy created and a reference included to the other term entry.

Where a preferred or admitted term is specific to a particular English-speaking country, e.g. the United States of America, etc., this has been given in boldface type following the international preferred term and annotated by 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 the English-speaking countries. A term following the preferred term not given in boldface type is an admitted (non-preferred) synonym. Country codes are also assigned to these terms.

In most countries, synonyms and alternative spellings exist for the preferred terms used in this part of ISO 6707, and a list of synonyms and alternative spellings is given in [Annex A](#). To facilitate a ready comparison with US synonyms and alternative spellings, these are given in [Annex B](#).

3 Types of buildings and civil engineering works

3.1 Base terms

3.1.1

construction works

US: construction

everything that is constructed or results from construction operations

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there are homographs for the term “construction”. See [5.5.6](#) and [7.1.1](#).

3.1.2

civil engineering works

US: civil engineering project

construction works (3.1.1) comprising a *structure* (3.1.4), such as a *dam* (3.2.22), *bridge* (3.3.19), *road* (3.3.1), *railway* (3.3.3), runway, utilities, *pipeline* (3.2.30), or *sewerage system* (5.4.40), or the result of operations such as dredging, *earthwork* (7.1.6), geotechnical processes, but excluding a *building* (3.1.3) and its associated *site* (3.1.6) works

Note 1 to entry: Associated siteworks are included in US civil engineering projects.

3.1.3

building

construction works (3.1.1) 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: In English, there is a homograph for the term “building”. See 7.1.4.

3.1.4

structure

construction works (3.1.1) having a *structure* (5.1.2)

Note 1 to entry: In English, there is a homograph for the term “structure”. See 5.1.2.

3.1.5

external works

US: sitework

construction works (3.1.1) or landscape work on *land* (10.1) associated with, and adjacent to, *civil engineering works* (3.1.2) or a *building* (3.1.3)

3.1.6

site

area of *land* (10.1) or water where *construction work* (7.1.1) or other development is undertaken

3.2 Civil engineering works

3.2.1

earthworks

result of change of existing terrain

3.2.2

excavation

result of digging, lifting, and removing earth, *fill* (6.4.9), or other *material* (6.1.1) from the *ground* (6.2.1)

3.2.3

embankment

section of *earthworks* (3.2.1), often formed by *cut* (3.2.5) or *fill* (6.4.9), where the *finished ground level* (9.2.34) is above or below original *ground level* (9.2.33) and whose *length* (9.2.18) usually greatly exceeds its *width* (9.2.16)

3.2.4

bund

US: berm

low *embankment* (3.2.3)

3.2.5

cut

material (6.1.1) excavated in bulk

Note 1 to entry: In English, there is a homograph for the term “cut”. See 3.2.6.

3.2.6**cut**

void that results from bulk *excavation* (3.2.2) of *material* (6.1.1)

Note 1 to entry: In English, there is a homograph for the term “cut”. See 3.2.5.

3.2.7**cut and fill**

earthwork (7.1.6) technique for lessening or increasing a variation in *ground level* (9.2.33) by using *material* (6.1.1) excavated from higher *ground* (6.2.1) to raise the *level* (9.2.32) of lower ground or the reverse

3.2.8**adit**

nearly level tunnel (3.3.18) driven to underground workings

3.2.9**made ground**

US: **fill**

ground (6.2.1) that has been formed by using *material* (6.1.1) to fill in a depression or to raise the *level* (9.2.32) of a *site* (3.1.6)

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “fill”. See 6.4.9.

3.2.10**bund wall**

US: **retaining earthworks**

wall (5.2.46) that forms an enclosure around a storage tank and is used to retain the contents in the event of tank failure

3.2.11**dumpling**

US: **mound**

large mass of *ground* (6.2.1) intended to be excavated but temporarily left as a support during *construction work* (7.1.1)

3.2.12**trench**

horizontal or slightly inclined long, narrow open *excavation* (3.2.2), usually with vertical sides

3.2.13**shaft**

vertical or steeply inclined *excavation* (3.2.2), usually of limited cross-section in relation to its *depth* (9.2.15)

3.2.14**borrow pit**

area within which *earthwork* (7.1.6) takes place in order to produce *material* (6.1.1) for *earthworks* (3.2.1)

3.2.15**borehole**

hole, usually vertical, bored to determine *ground* (6.2.1) conditions, for extraction of water, other liquids, or gases, or *measurement* (7.1.25) of groundwater *level* (9.2.32)

3.2.16**retaining wall**

wall (5.2.46) that provides lateral support to the *ground* (6.2.1) or that resists pressure from a mass of other *material* (6.1.1)

3.2.17

diaphragm wall

wall (5.2.46) made of *concrete* (6.4.15) constructed in a *trench* (3.2.12) temporarily supported by *bentonite* (3.2.18) suspension

Note 1 to entry: In English, there is a homograph for the term “diaphragm wall”. See 5.1.63.

Note 2 to entry: In the US, there are homographs for the term “diaphragm wall”. See 5.1.61 and 5.1.63.

3.2.18

bentonite

clay, formed by the decomposition of volcanic ash, that swells as it absorbs water

3.2.19

water tower

civil engineering works (3.1.2) that comprises a large water tank raised above *ground level* (9.2.33)

3.2.20

silo

structure (3.1.4) for the storage of a large volume of loose material

3.2.21

breakwater

long *structure* (3.1.4) in a body of water designed to protect a *basin* (3.3.64) or the shore from waves

3.2.22

dam

barrier (5.2.9) constructed to retain water in order to raise its *level* (9.2.32), form a *reservoir* (3.2.36), or reduce or prevent flooding

3.2.23

flood bank

embankment (3.2.3) built up to retain or control the *level* (9.2.32) of flood water

3.2.24

cofferdam

structure (3.1.4), usually temporary, that is built to support the surrounding *ground* (6.2.1) or to exclude water or *soil* (6.2.2) sufficiently to permit work within it to proceed safely without excessive pumping

3.2.25

swale

slightly inclined, often heavily vegetated or paved with gravel, *stone* (6.2.4), or *concrete* (6.4.15) 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 10.8.

3.2.26

irrigation

artificial distribution of water to *land* (10.1), usually for growing crops

3.2.27

weir

structure (3.1.4) over which water can flow, used to control the upstream water *level* (9.2.32) in a *watercourse* (10.8) or other *channel* (5.4.16), and/or to measure the *flow* (9.3.41)

3.2.28

penstock

US: **lock gate**

gate, usually rectangular, that moves vertically between guides

3.2.29**spillway**

passage for the discharge of excess water from a *reservoir* (3.2.36) or *channel* (5.4.16)

3.2.30**pipeline**

long continuous line of *pipes* (5.4.17), including ancillary equipment, used for transporting liquids or gases

3.2.31**aqueduct**

conduit (5.4.14) for conveying water over long distances, and including the supporting *structure* (5.1.2)

3.2.32**water supply adit**

tunnel (3.3.18) driven from the ground to provide access to or drainage from underground workings

3.2.33**culvert**

transverse *drain* (5.4.38) or waterway *structure* (3.1.4) under a *road* (3.3.1), *railway* (3.3.3), or *canal* (3.3.61), or through an *embankment* (3.2.3), in the form of a large *pipe* (5.4.17) or enclosed *channel* (5.4.16)

3.2.34**headworks**

intake and associated works at the upstream end of a *water engineering* (7.1.11) scheme

3.2.35**rising main**

water main or pressurized section of a *drain* (5.4.38) or *sewer* (5.4.41) through which liquid is pumped to a higher level (9.2.32)

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3.2.36**reservoir**

pond, lake, or *basin* (3.3.64), either naturally occurring or man-made, for storage, regulation, and control of water and other liquids or gases

3.3 Civil engineering works — Transport**3.3.1****road**

way mainly for vehicles

3.3.2**exit**

designated point of departure from a *road* (3.3.1)

Note 1 to entry: In English, there is a homograph for the term “exit”. See 4.4.17.

3.3.3**railway**

US: **railroad**

national or regional transport system for guided passage of wheeled vehicles on rails

3.3.4**tramway**

US: **streetcar**

local transport system for guided passage of wheeled vehicles on rails

3.3.5

aerial ropeway

US: **cableway**

US: lift

local transport system for guided passage of cabins or containers carried on *cables* (6.4.54) on intermediate supports

3.3.6

underground railway

US: **subway**

railway (3.3.3) that operates mainly below *ground level* (9.2.33)

3.3.7

mass transit railway

railway (3.3.3) for the rapid movement of high passenger load densities in urban areas

3.3.8

monorail

railway (3.3.3) that has a single running rail with *beam* (5.1.11) support

3.3.9

track

assembly (5.5.5) of rails, *fastenings* (5.5.72), and support, for passage of vehicles

3.3.10

sleeper

US: **tie**

member providing vertical and lateral support to rails of a *railway* (3.3.3) or *tramway* (3.3.4)

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “tie”. See 5.1.22.

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3.3.11

airfield

defined area including any *buildings* (3.1.3), *installations* (5.4.3), and equipment, for the arrival, departure, and movement of aircraft

3.3.12

airport

area containing an *airfield* (3.3.11) and facilities for handling passengers and cargo

3.3.13

noise barrier

structure (3.1.4) provided to deflect and absorb noise

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “noise barrier”. See 3.3.14.

3.3.14

noise bund

US: **noise barrier**

US: sound barrier

noise barrier (3.3.13) in the form of an *embankment* (3.2.3)

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “noise barrier”. See 3.3.13.

3.3.15

subgrade

upper part of the *soil* (6.2.2), natural or constructed, that supports the *loads* (9.3.19) transmitted by the overlying *structure* (5.1.2) of a *road* (3.3.1), runway, or similar hard surface

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3.3.16 road formation

US: **grade**

surface of *subgrade* (3.3.15) in its final shape after completion of *earthwork* (7.1.6)

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “grade”. See 9.2.33.

3.3.17 pavement

road (3.3.1), runway, or similar *construction* (5.5.6) above the *subgrade* (3.3.15)

3.3.18 tunnel

horizontal or sloping underground enclosed way of some *length* (9.2.18)

3.3.19 bridge

civil engineering works (3.1.2) that affords passage to pedestrians, animals, vehicles, and *services* (5.4.1) above obstacles or between two points at a *height* (9.2.20) above *ground* (6.2.1)

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “bridge”. See 7.3.10.

3.3.20 arch bridge

bridge (3.3.19) that has one or more *arches* (5.1.7) as its main *structure* (5.1.2)

3.3.21

bow string bridge

bridge (3.3.19) that has an *arch* (5.1.7) and its *tie* (5.1.22) as the main *structure* (5.1.2)

3.3.22

cantilever bridge

bridge (3.3.19), the main *structural members* (5.1.3) of which are *cantilevers* (5.1.17)

3.3.23

cable stayed bridge

bridge (3.3.19), the main *structural members* (5.1.3) of which are the *beams* (5.1.11) for the *deck* (5.1.35) supported by a tower and one or more inclined *cables* (6.4.54) connected to the top or the shaft of the tower

3.3.24

suspension bridge

bridge (3.3.19), the main *structural members* (5.1.3) of which are catenary *cables* (6.4.54) from which the *deck* (5.1.35) is suspended

3.3.25

floating bridge

bridge (3.3.19) supported by water

3.3.26

movable bridge

bridge (3.3.19) over a waterway, the *deck* (5.1.35) of which can be moved

3.3.27

bascule bridge

movable bridge (3.3.26), the *deck* (5.1.35) of which is counterbalanced and hinged on a horizontal axis

3.3.28

vertical lift bridge

US: drawbridge

movable bridge (3.3.26), the *deck* (5.1.35) of which can be raised vertically

3.3.29

swing bridge

movable bridge (3.3.26), the *deck* (5.1.35) of which can be rotated about a vertical axis

3.3.30

skew bridge

bridge (3.3.19) where the angle between the longitudinal axis and the lines of support is not a right angle

3.3.31

viaduct

bridge (3.3.19) composed of a large number of spans

3.3.32

footbridge

bridge (3.3.19) for the use of pedestrians

3.3.33

railway platform

elevated structure (3.1.4) for entraining and detraining passengers and goods

3.3.34

highway

US: parkway

US: freeway

way over which the public has the right to pass, this right possibly being restricted to specific classes of *traffic* (10.5)

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Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “parkway”. See 3.3.37.

Note 2 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “freeway”. See 3.3.37.

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3.3.35

carriageway

US: **roadway**

part of the *road* (3.3.1) or *highway* (3.3.34) constructed for use by vehicular *traffic* (10.5), including auxiliary *traffic lanes* (3.3.49), passing places, and *lay-bys* (3.3.36)

3.3.36

lay-by

US: **stopping lane**

US: emergency lane

part of the *highway* (3.3.34) set aside for vehicles to allow them to draw out of the *traffic lanes* (3.3.49) and wait for short periods

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “emergency lane”. See 3.3.39.

3.3.37

motorway

US: **interstate highway**

US: freeway

US: parkway

limited access *road* (3.3.1) with dual *carriageways* (3.3.35) that is not crossed on the same *level* (9.2.32) by other *traffic lanes* (3.3.49), for the exclusive use of certain classes of motor vehicles

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “parkway”. See 3.3.34.

Note 2 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “freeway”. See 3.3.34.

3.3.38**vehicle restraint system**US: **guardrail**US: **barricade**

structure ([5.1.2](#)) that provides a system of containment for errant vehicles so as to limit damage or injury

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “barricade”. See [3.3.41](#).

3.3.39**hard shoulder**US: **emergency lane**US: **service lane**

surfaced strip, adjacent to and abutting a *carriageway* ([3.3.35](#)), intended for use by vehicles in the event of difficulty or during obstruction of the carriageway

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “emergency lane”. See [3.3.36](#).

3.3.40**road safety fence**US: **road safety rail**

vehicle restraint system ([3.3.38](#)) installed alongside or on a *central reserve* ([3.3.48](#)) or a *road* ([3.3.1](#)) in the form of one or more horizontal members mounted on *posts* ([5.1.52](#))

3.3.41**road safety barrier**US: **barricade**

vehicle restraint system ([3.3.38](#)) alongside a *carriageway* ([3.3.35](#)) in the form of a continuous low *wall* ([5.2.46](#)) or similar *construction* ([5.5.6](#))

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “barricade”. See [3.3.38](#).

3.3.42**crash cushion**US: **impact barrier**

energy-absorbing device installed in front of a rigid object to reduce the severity of impact of a vehicle

3.3.43**arrester bed**AU: **safety ramp**US: **emergency ramp**

area of *land* ([10.1](#)) adjacent to a *road* ([3.3.1](#)), filled with a particular *material* ([6.1.1](#)) and designed to decelerate and arrest errant vehicles, generally located on long downhill portions of a road

3.3.44**cycleway**US: **bicycle path**

way or separated part of a *road* ([3.3.1](#)) for use only by pedal cycles

3.3.45**kerb**US: **curb**

border, usually upstanding, at the edge of a *carriageway* ([3.3.35](#)), hard strip, *hard shoulder* ([3.3.39](#)), or *footway* ([3.3.55](#))

3.3.46**soft shoulder**

strip alongside a *carriageway* ([3.3.35](#)) not intended to support vehicular *traffic* ([10.5](#))