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**Buildings and civil engineering  
works — Vocabulary —**

**Part 1:  
General terms**

**Здания и сооружения —  
Словарь —**

**Часть 1:  
Основные термины**

*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](http://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](http://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 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](http://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 sixth edition cancels and replaces ISO 6707-1:2017, ISO 1791:1983, and ISO 1803:1997, which have been technically revised.

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

- some ambiguous concepts have been clarified;
- the edition is published in English and Russian;
- the wood and timber subclause has been updated to incorporate changes made to the latest edition of ISO 24294;
- the occasions where a single term is used to represent more than one concept have been reduced.

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

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

# Introduction

## 0.1 Overview

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.

## 0.2 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.

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.



# 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](#).

Note 2 to entry: Refers to both *buildings* ([3.1.1.3](#)) and *civil engineering works* ([3.1.1.2](#)).

###### 3.1.1.2

###### **civil engineering works**

###### **civil engineering project**, US

*construction works* ([3.1.1.1](#)) comprising a *construction* ([3.3.5.6](#)), 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* ([3.1.1.5](#)) works

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

**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  
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)

**3.1.1.5  
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* (3.4.1.1) 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* (3.7.2.67) is above original ground level 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* (3.4.1.1) 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)

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

**3.1.2.7  
cut and fill**

*earthwork* (3.5.1.6) technique for lessening or increasing a variation in *ground level* (3.7.2.66) by using *material* (3.4.1.1) excavated from higher *ground* (3.4.2.1) to raise the *level* (3.7.2.38) 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* (3.4.1.1) to fill in a depression or to raise the level (3.7.2.38) of a *site* (3.1.1.5)

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 (3.7.2.38)

**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* (3.4.1.1)

**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 3.3.1.62.

Note 2 to entry: In the US, there are homographs for the term “diaphragm wall”. See 3.3.1.60 and 3.3.1.62.

**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 comprises a large water tank raised above *ground level* (3.7.2.66)

3.1.2.20

**silo**

*construction* ([3.3.5.6](#)) for the storage of a large volume of loose material

3.1.2.21

**breakwater**

mole, GB

long *construction* ([3.3.5.6](#)) 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* ([3.7.2.38](#)), 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* ([3.7.2.38](#)) of flood water

3.1.2.24

**cofferdam**

*construction* ([3.3.5.6](#)), 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**

*construction* ([3.3.5.6](#)) over which water can flow, used to control the upstream water *level* ([3.7.2.38](#)) 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

3.1.2.29

**spillway**

waste weir, GB

passage for the discharge of excess water from a *reservoir* ([3.1.2.36](#)) or *channel* ([3.3.4.16](#))

3.1.2.30

**pipeline**

long continuous line of *pipes* ([3.3.4.17](#)), including ancillary equipment, used for transporting liquids or gases

**3.1.2.31****aqueduct**

*construction* (3.3.5.6) for conveying water over long distances, comprised of a *conduit* (3.3.4.14) and a supporting *structure* (3.3.1.2)

**3.1.2.32****water supply adit**

*adit* (3.1.2.8) from a *shaft* (3.1.2.13) to an aquifer to increase available water supply

**3.1.2.33****culvert**

transverse *drain* (3.3.4.38) or waterway *construction* (3.3.5.6) under a *road* (3.1.3.1), *railway* (3.1.3.3), or *canal* (3.1.3.61), or through an *embankment* (3.1.2.3), in the form of a large *pipe* (3.3.4.17) or enclosed *channel* (3.3.4.16)

**3.1.2.34****headworks**

intake and associated works at the upstream end of a *water engineering* (3.5.1.11) scheme

**3.1.2.35****rising main**

water main or pressurized section of a *drain* (3.3.4.38) or *sewer* (3.3.4.41) through which liquid is pumped to a higher *level* (3.7.2.38)

**3.1.2.36****reservoir**

pond, lake, or *basin* (3.1.3.64), either naturally occurring or man-made, for storage, regulation, and control of water

**3.1.3 Civil engineering works — Transport****3.1.3.1****road**

way mainly for vehicles

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**3.1.3.2****exit**

designated point of departure from a *road* (3.1.3.1)

Note 1 to entry: There is a homograph for the term “exit”. See 3.2.4.18.

**3.1.3.3****railway****railroad, US**

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

**3.1.3.4****tramway****streetcar, US**

local transport system for guided passage of wheeled vehicles on rails

**3.1.3.5****aerial ropeway****cableway, US**

lift, US

local transport system for guided passage of cabins or containers carried on *cables* (3.4.4.54) on intermediate supports

**3.1.3.6**

**underground railway**

**subway**, US

*railway* ([3.1.3.3](#)) that operates mainly below *ground level* ([3.7.2.66](#))

**3.1.3.7**

**mass transit railway**

*railway* ([3.1.3.3](#)) for the rapid movement of high passenger load densities in urban areas

**3.1.3.8**

**monorail**

*railway* ([3.1.3.3](#)) that has a single running rail with *beam* ([3.3.1.11](#)) support

**3.1.3.9**

**track**

*assembly* ([3.3.5.5](#)) of rails, *fastenings* ([3.3.5.83](#)), and support, for passage of vehicles

**3.1.3.10**

**sleeper**

**tie**, US

member providing vertical and lateral support to rails of a *railway* ([3.1.3.3](#)) or *tramway* ([3.1.3.4](#))

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “tie”. See [3.3.1.22](#).

**3.1.3.11**

**airfield**

defined area including any *buildings* ([3.1.1.3](#)), *installations* ([3.3.4.3](#)), and equipment, for the arrival, departure, and movement of aircraft

**3.1.3.12**

**airport**

area containing an *airfield* ([3.1.3.11](#)) and facilities for handling passengers and cargo

**3.1.3.13**

**noise barrier**

*construction* ([3.3.5.6](#)) provided to deflect and absorb noise

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “noise barrier”. See [3.1.3.14](#).

**3.1.3.14**

**noise bund**

**noise barrier**, US

sound barrier, US

*noise barrier* ([3.1.3.13](#)) in the form of an *embankment* ([3.1.2.3](#))

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “noise barrier”. See [3.1.3.13](#).

**3.1.3.15**

**subgrade**

upper part of the *soil* ([3.4.2.2](#)), natural or constructed, that supports the *loads* ([3.7.3.19](#)) transmitted by the overlying *structure* ([3.3.1.2](#)) of a *road* ([3.1.3.1](#)), runway, or similar hard surface

**3.1.3.16**

**road formation**

**grade**, US

surface of *subgrade* ([3.1.3.15](#)) in its final shape after completion of *earthwork* ([3.5.1.6](#))

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “grade”. See [3.7.2.66](#).

**3.1.3.17**

**pavement**

*road* ([3.1.3.1](#)), runway, or similar *construction* ([3.3.5.6](#)) above the *subgrade* ([3.1.3.15](#))

**3.1.3.18****tunnel**

horizontal or sloping underground enclosed way of some *length* (3.7.2.10)

**3.1.3.19****bridge**

*civil engineering works* (3.1.1.2) that affords passage to pedestrians, animals, vehicles, and *services* (3.3.4.1) above obstacles or between two points at a *height* (3.7.2.35) above *ground level* (3.7.2.66)

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “bridge”. See 3.5.3.10.

**3.1.3.20****arch bridge**

*bridge* (3.1.3.19) that has one or more *arches* (3.3.1.7) as its main *structure* (3.3.1.2)

**3.1.3.21****bow string bridge**

*bridge* (3.1.3.19) that has an *arch* (3.3.1.7) and its *tie* (3.3.1.22) as the main *structure* (3.3.1.2)

**3.1.3.22****cantilever bridge**

*bridge* (3.1.3.19), the main *structural members* (3.3.1.3) of which are *cantilevers* (3.3.1.17)

**3.1.3.23****cable stayed bridge**

*bridge* (3.1.3.19) with one or more towers and inclined *cables* (3.4.4.54) that are connected to the top or the shaft of the tower and support the *deck* (3.3.1.35)

**3.1.3.24****suspension bridge**

*bridge* (3.1.3.19), the main *structural members* (3.3.1.3) of which are catenary *cables* (3.4.4.54) from which the *deck* (3.3.1.35) is suspended

**3.1.3.25****floating bridge**

*bridge* (3.1.3.19) supported by water

**3.1.3.26****movable bridge**

*bridge* (3.1.3.19) over a waterway, the *deck* (3.3.1.35) of which can be moved

**3.1.3.27****bascule bridge**

*movable bridge* (3.1.3.26), the *deck* (3.3.1.35) of which is counterbalanced and hinged on a horizontal axis

**3.1.3.28****vertical lift bridge**

drawbridge, US

*movable bridge* (3.1.3.26), the *deck* (3.3.1.35) of which can be raised vertically

**3.1.3.29****swing bridge**

*movable bridge* (3.1.3.26), the *deck* (3.3.1.35) of which can be rotated about a vertical axis

**3.1.3.30****skew bridge**

*bridge* (3.1.3.19) where the angle between the longitudinal axis and the lines of support is not a right angle

**3.1.3.31****viaduct**

*bridge* (3.1.3.19) composed of a large number of spans

**3.1.3.32**

**footbridge**

bridge ([3.1.3.19](#)) for the use of pedestrians

**3.1.3.33**

**railway platform**

elevated *construction* ([3.3.5.6](#)) for entraining and detraining passengers and goods

**3.1.3.34**

**highway**

**parkway, US**

freeway, US

*road* ([3.1.3.1](#)) over which the public has the right to pass, this right possibly being restricted to specific classes of *traffic* ([3.8.5](#))

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “parkway”. See [3.1.3.37](#).

Note 2 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “freeway”. See [3.1.3.37](#).

**3.1.3.35**

**carriageway**

**roadway, US**

part of the *road* ([3.1.3.1](#)) or *highway* ([3.1.3.34](#)) constructed for use by vehicular *traffic* ([3.8.5](#)), including auxiliary *traffic lanes* ([3.1.3.49](#)), passing places, and *lay-bys* ([3.1.3.36](#))

**3.1.3.36**

**lay-by**

**stopping lane, US**

emergency lane, US

part of the *highway* ([3.1.3.34](#)) set aside for vehicles to allow them to draw out of the *traffic lanes* ([3.1.3.49](#)) and wait for short periods

Note 1 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “emergency lane”. See [3.1.3.39](#).

**3.1.3.37**

**motorway**

**interstate highway, US**

freeway, US

parkway, US

limited access *road* ([3.1.3.1](#)) with dual *carriageways* ([3.1.3.35](#)) that is not crossed on the same *level* ([3.7.2.38](#)) by other *traffic lanes* ([3.1.3.49](#)), 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 [3.1.3.34](#).

Note 2 to entry: In the US, there is a homograph for the term “freeway”. See [3.1.3.34](#).

**3.1.3.38**

**vehicle restraint system**

**guardrail, US**

**barricade, US**

*structure* ([3.3.1.2](#)) 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 [3.1.3.41](#).