

There are some great online guides to laying concrete, but here are the basics for a typical DIY or garden job. This is not meant to provide comprehensive instructions and there may be conditions specific to your site to take in to consideration. If in doubt talk to one of our sales agents for advice.

1 Safety first

Wet concrete can cause burns to the skin, so make sure you're wearing the right gear - waterproof gloves, long-sleeved clothes, safety boots and eye protection. See our concrete safety data sheet for details.



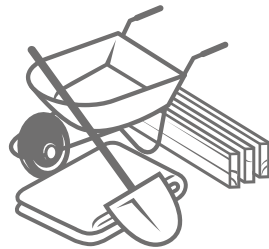
6 Order your concrete!

We can normally deliver within 48 hours. Ask for advice on preparing for the delivery. Concrete should not be laid in very cold or wet conditions, so choose carefully when you want to do the job.



2 Get the right tools

Spade, shovel, tape measure, string line, wooden pegs, spirit level, finishing trowel / float, builder's T-square, wheelbarrow, wooden tamping bar, lump hammer, levelling beam, wooden planks, polythene sheeting.



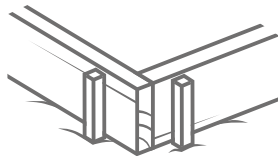
7 Get set for delivery

Give yourself plenty of time to prepare for, receive, lay and finish the concrete. Ready-mixed concrete typically has a working time of a couple of hours, after which it begins to go off, so you need to work fast! Why not have friends and family over to help out?



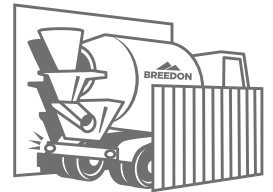
3 Prepare the area

Dig the space for your concrete and prepare the wooden formwork to securely hold the mix in place. Allow 100mm depth for the concrete (depending on your project) and another 100mm for a hardcore base. The top of the formwork should be level with the finished concrete surface. Consider issues such as dampproofing, drainage and run-off water (25mm fall for every 2m length).



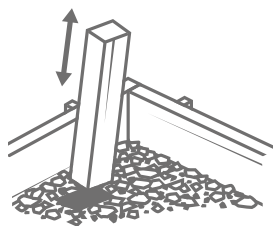
8 What's the access like?

A typical mixer truck is 3m wide and weighs over 20 tonnes, so we can't always pour directly from the truck into your space. You can use a temporary container (e.g. a large skip) or transfer the concrete quickly to avoid 'waiting time' charges. Depending on the location and volume, transfer options include hiring a mini-dumper, hiring a concrete pump, creating a wooden chute or using friends and neighbours with wheelbarrows (bear in mind that 4m³ of concrete is over 100 barrow loads!)



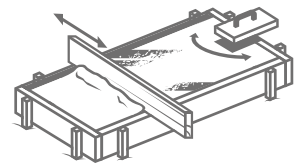
4 Create a sound base

Ensure the ground beneath the space where the concrete will go is level and very compacted. Line the area with a 100mm layer of hardcore (aggregate, stones, broken brick, etc.) and tamp down firmly to give a solid base.



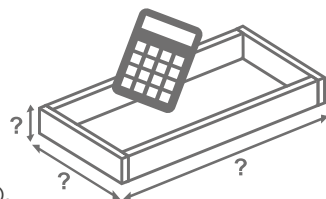
9 Levelling and smoothing

As the concrete goes into your space, push the mix into all corners of the footings and formwork, tamping it down into place with a wooden beam. Then use a straight beam to level the surface, using a steel trowel to shift the concrete around and achieve a smooth finish.



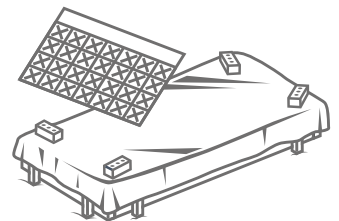
5 Do your calculations

Measure and calculate the amount of concrete you will need using our concrete calculator (www.1stmix.co.uk/ready-mixed-concrete-calculator/). Double check your measurements to be certain to order the right amount, as miscalculations can be expensive!



10 Completion

Once the concrete is laid, cover it with polythene sheeting to stop it curing too quickly (which may cause cracking). A spray-on curing agent may be used to reduce curing time, increase durability and seal the surface. Allow at least a week for the concrete to cure, and more if the weather is cold and wet. Full strength is typically achieved after one month.



Need a high-performance mix?

If you require a concrete which is free-flowing, has high early strength or is fibre-reinforced then ask about Breedon's range of performance products.

Call our sales line: **01623 541 415**

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