



IT'S ARRIVED!

This week saw the long-awaited publication of the latest version of the NAMM Code of Working Practice, the primary document that governs the way we fix memorials.

The new version is more than just an update, it is almost a complete re-write. The scope of the Code has been widened, there have been major changes to some of its core elements and there are a few more graphical representations of key pieces of information for easier understanding.

One of the many aims of the new Code is to reduce the amount of information that is duplicated. For example, there is now a separate section devoted solely to dowels instead of having duplicated tables and references to dowels in each of the memorial sections.

To help guide you through the new Code we have highlighted what we consider to be the most important changes to the Code and the potential impact these changes may have on the way you fix.

INCREASE IN THE HEIGHT AT WHICH THE REQUIREMENT FOR A GROUND ANCHOR SYSTEM KICKS IN

Memorials under 625mm (a fraction over 24" for most of us) no longer require a ground anchor when fixing. This is up from 500mm, or just under 20". For us, and we imagine for many other masons, it now means that

most cremation memorials now no longer need to be fixed with an anchor system.

We think this is a welcome move as the potential for serious injury from memorials under two feet high is fairly remote.

GROUND LEVEL REMOVED!

Ground level has been removed from the fixing diagrams. This presumably means that you don't have to dig the foundation in when fixing. If you are fixing on granite or natural stone foundations, it will allow you to show off your expensive foundation. However, be careful, as the overall height is measured from ground level. Those extra 3" may make a difference to the ground anchor requirements.

MINIMUM SIZES FOR FOUNDATIONS REDUCED

Whilst we're talking foundations, the specification for the minimum size of a flag foundation has now changed from 15" front to back and wider than the memorial base to "it must be bigger than memorial base". This is a **major** change with significant consequences.

The main reason for the original 15" front to back dimension was to distribute the load over a wider area in an attempt to reduce the effects of settlement – some masons thought that even 15" wasn't enough and that flag foundations should be 18" deep. We don't know all the reasons behind this change but before you stop going to the gym and start ordering your smaller foundations from Sharcon ...

BEWARE

.... all ground anchor systems have been tested and accredited by NAMM using a reinforced concrete foundation flag that is 15" front to back. No accreditation tests have been carried out on a foundation smaller than this. Existing accredited ground anchors may work with narrower foundations but the geometry and the forces involved when using a smaller foundation are very different. At this point in time if you change to using smaller foundations where the Code requires a memorial to be fitted with a ground anchor system you will not have any recourse to the manufacturer. If anything untoward happened and it went to Court you would find yourself in a difficult situation to say the least.

Until we have done some testing on smaller foundations, we suggest you continue to use the old 15" minimum standard for foundation flags when fixing with any of our ground anchors. We will update you should our recommendation change.

CHANGES TO THE BOLTING METHOD AS DOWEL HOLE SIZES ARE STANDARDISED

A few things have been standardised in the new Code, one of which is dowel hole sizes. There are some significant implications resulting from this standardisation if you are using the bolting method for fixing plate to base. When using the bolting method the hole in the base can no longer be twice the diameter of the dowel. The diameter of the dowel hole must

now be no greater than 8mm more than the diameter of the dowel, thus removing one of the advantages of using the bolting method. It means that base hole sizes are down from 24 to 20 mm when using 12mm dowels and from 32 to 24mm when using 16mm dowels – those useful extra millimetres of play have gone.

Be careful when using the tables in the dowel hole section. It is possible to misinterpret the information on the bolting method and use overall memorial height to determine dowel hole size instead of using the diameter of the dowel as the determining factor.

Other bad news for those using the bolting method is that the use of 10mm diameter dowels is now banned and you can only use 12mm dowels for memorials up to 900mm high – down from 1200mm.

It's not all bad news though – on the plus side you can now use smaller washers!

CAUTIONS ON THE USE OF RESINS

Following a few well-documented cases of failings in adhesives, the Code is now more concerned about the use of polyester resins and polymer adhesives. The Code specifically states that polymer and silicon based adhesives are now considered “generally unsuitable for fixing structural parts of the memorial unless specifically guaranteed by the manufacturer”.

Whilst we would certainly question the use of a polymer adhesive for securing dowels as it never sets completely rigid, when used a bonding agent between smooth, clean stone surfaces, it performs significantly better than cement. The flexibility in the adhesive helps it to cope better with expansion and contraction than cement.

We continue to recommend our FirmaBond for stone to stone joints - make sure you use a spacer if you ever want to split the joint again – whilst our FirmaFix resin has been proven to give excellent performance, even over significant periods of time and is our recommended product for fixing dowels.

80% CONTACT AREA REMAINS INTACT

You may recall our questioning in the Christmas newsletter of the validity of the 80% contact rule for cement joints between memorial base and foundation. No further guidance here unfortunately; NAMM's stance on the contact area for cement joints remains unchanged. We would still like to see this matter investigated further, maybe one for the Technical Committee to review before the next update.

NEW SECTIONS

The Code has now been extended to cover a large number of areas associated but not directly related to fixing memorials.

New sections include Crosses and Figures, Canopies and Arches, Tall Memorials including Table Monuments, Mausoleums, Repair and Reinstatement of Old Memorials Cleaning Memorials, Listed Heritage Memorials and Safety Assessment of Memorials. The degree to which each area is covered varies considerably from the tips and tricks of cleaning to the challenges involved in installing large monuments. Time will tell if their place has been cemented in the Code - maybe 80% of them will stay?

In summary the Code of Working Practice is no longer just our bible for fixing techniques. It provides us with a source of reference for areas of masonry that not all of us may be involved with on a daily basis.

NEW BLAST POT LAUNCHED

Ever since the demise of Lindsey and Easiblaster we keep getting asked for an alternative, economical, controllable, small blast pot, usually for carrying out design work.

In our continual search for new products we came across a blast gun with very good grit control, perfect for those shaded or delicate designs. Attach this gun to a small pressure pot and we believe you have the perfect small design unit, one which, can also function as a backup system your main blaster.



There are two sizes of blast pot available, either a 3kg or a 25kg version. Each provides you with a system that is easy to fill with the right grit for the job in hand at a price that won't exactly break the bank.



The guns are also available separately and can be attached to most pressure pots. Grit and airflow are both controlled by a trigger on the gun giving you complete fingertip control over the blasting process.