

PERMEABLE AND HEAVY-DUTY SEGMENTAL UNIT PAVEMENTS

TECHNICAL GUIDE



UNILOCK

PERMEABLE PAVER DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

RAINFALL INTENSITY AND DURATION are typically analyzed together for traditional non-permeable surfaces. However, with a permeable paver surface, intensity is less of a factor as the surface infiltration rate will exceed the capabilities of most storms. A permeable paver surface is capable of handling more than 100" (2,540 mm) per hour. The paver joints must be adequately maintained to allow for maximum infiltration.

Although many rainfall events only last for a few minutes, for larger rainfall events, the impact of duration is important to recognize. A heavy rain could fall at the intensity rate of 6" (152 mm) per hour, but the duration may only last for 10 minutes with a resulting actual rain amount of only 1" (25 mm). Longer duration events can often be more demanding, even with less intensity. Actual monthly rainfalls in the Midwest U.S., for example, average 4" (100 mm). Therefore, permeable paving systems can easily contain most rainfall events.

RUNOFF COEFFICIENT (C VALUE) is used to measure the percentage of water that runs off different surface types. For example, bituminous asphalt has a C value of 0.85. This means that during a rainfall, 85 percent of the water will run off the surface. (Source: Design and Construction of Sanitary and Storm Sewers, American Society of Civil Engineers, New York, p. 332, 1969). In comparison, turf has a C value of 0.15 or 15 percent. The C value of permeable paving, with up to a 5 percent slope, is actually zero, unless the rainfall intensity exceeds the surface infiltration rate or the entire open-graded base reaches capacity. With a properly designed permeable paver system, capacity will rarely be reached. To achieve maximum surface infiltration, maintenance of the joints may be necessary.

SOIL INFILTRATION is another way to absorb runoff. During the site investigation project phase, conducting a geotechnical or porosity test will determine the soil infiltration rate, which will establish stormwater design requirements. Typical industry recommendations suggest installing an underdrain for soil with less than 0.5" (13 mm) per hour of infiltration. It is possible for underdrain systems to be eliminated for soils with infiltration rates greater than 0.5" (13 mm) per hour.

RELEASE RATE refers to the volume of water that is allowed to be discharged into a municipal system or waterway, usually measured in cubic feet per second. Many stormwater regulatory agencies require that the post-development release rate not exceed pre-development conditions. Permeable paving slows and detains stormwater in the open-graded base so that it can be gradually released. Local jurisdictions should be contacted for required release rates.

