



As the construction industry gradually gains post-pandemic momentum, there has been a steady support for the School of Concrete Technology's "Mortars, Plasters, Screeds, and Masonry - SCT12" online training course for home builders.

Matthews Magwaza, lecturer at the School – who is part of Cement & Concrete SA – says the SCT12 course and originally developed to assist National Home Builders' Registration Council (NHBRC) inspectors in interpreting assessing the requirements of the NHBRC Home Builder's Manual. South African builders must enroll new homes with the NHBRC before construction starts to protect housing consumers' rights.

Magwaza says builders from diverse parts of South Africa, including the Eastern Cape and KZN, have recently completed the one-day course, which includes a laboratory session in the form of a virtual presentation, video recording, and description.

Currently, the course is available online, but should lockdown regulations allow, and plans are to resume live classes in Midrand, Cape Town, and Durban later in 2022.

The syllabus for "Mortars, Plasters, Screeds, and Masonry" includes:

- Factors that affect the strength of concrete;
- The role and selection of cement, sand, stone, and water in the production of concrete;
- Mix proportions for concrete for foundations and floors;
- Floor screeds;
- Properties of mortar and plaster;
- Sand-cement mixes;
- Slump and cube tests for concrete;
- Vital role of proper curing;
- Concrete and clay masonry: expansion and shrinkage;
- Cavity and block walls;
- Importance of movement joints;
- Common causes of cracking; and
- Receiving and storage of materials.

Magwaza says the School of Concrete Technology has generally been impressed by the students' enthusiasm to learn more about concrete and provide satisfactory sustainable homes. "If there is an area still commonly neglected by the home builders we have taught, it is curing. There still seems to be a great deal of ignorance about proper curing's significant influence on concrete durability, strength, wear-resistance, and stability.

STEADY SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL OF CONCRETE TECHNOLOGY'S HOME BUILDERS' COURSE

Even concrete that has been specified, matched, mixed, placed, and finished could still fail if the project is not completed with proper curing," Magwaza stated.

The School of Concrete Technology will present several SCT12 courses this year. The first three, which are likely to be held online, will be February 24, March 31, and May 19. In addition, live classes are provisionally planned for Durban and Cape Town in June and August, respectively, should lockdown regulations be relaxed.

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