



Statement on defective building materials – 11th February 2022

Issues surrounding defective building materials containing excessive amounts of minerals such as mica and pyrite have been appearing in headlines and in news reports. Affected homeowners have been campaigning and lobbying government for support towards redress for the remediation of the affected houses for the past number of months.

The IGI have been involved with supporting the National Standards Authority Ireland (NSAI) since 2012 when they were invited by the Aggregates Panel to provide assistance in the preparation of a standard to assess houses for the possible presence of pyrite. As a result of that work, the IGI were invited onto the Aggregates Panel to provide technical support. This resulted in ongoing work on documents such as SR21 (Unbound aggregate) (last amended in 2016), SR16 (Aggregate for Concrete) (2016) and SR18 (Aggregate for Mortar) (2021), which were all reviewed and updated to reflect the lessons learned during the pyrite problem.

More recently, the mica / pyrite blocks issue was discovered. The Department of Housing originally approached the IGI for nominations on who could act as a geologist to assist the Mica Expert Panel to draft a report outlining the nature and possible scale of the issue. An IGI member accepted and the report was published in 2017.

One of the recommendations within this report was the development of an Irish standard to allow houses to be assessed to determine the extent of any issues relating to mica or pyrite within the blockwork, and also the proposed suitable remediation measures. For that reason a working group was set up in the NSAI with members drawn from industry, local government, Engineers Ireland and the IGI. IS 465 was published in 2018. It was further amended and that amendment was published in 2020. IGI has an ongoing involvement with the NSAI, providing expertise to assist in the writing of national guidance and standards, and also in circulating those documents to our members for comment during public consultation.

The IGI also holds a register of competent persons (“Qualified person in respects of carrying out geological aspects of work related to pyrite described in IS 398-1 and EN 13242 - including SR21”) in relation to pyrite (“Qualified person in respects of carrying out geological aspects of work related to pyrite described in IS 398-1 and EN 13242 - including SR21”) and as such monitors the CPD and training of those individuals to ensure that they remain up to date on the latest developments in the field. These people must be on the register to prepare reports relating to the suitability of a quarry to produce materials according to the recent standards published by the NSAI (SR21, SR16 and SR18). The IGI has been involved through the NSAI in ensuring that aggregate products which are being produced for use beneath houses and roads, along with materials for use in concrete and blocks, are all suitable for use and fit for purpose. We will continue to support the NSAI via our professional membership and assisting in implementing the relevant available standards.

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