GB CONCRETE & PUMP

FREE GUIDE · WINTER 2026/27

The Winter Window

How to plan, pour and protect concrete through the colder months, and get the most out of your Christmas shutdown, half-term or quiet season.

Cold-weather pouring | Shutdown countdown | Farms · Factories · Schools | Volume guide

INTRODUCTION

Winter isn't the off-season. It's the window.

Lots of people put concrete work on hold until spring. But for many sites, winter is the only time the space is actually free. The yard is quiet, the production line is off and the pupils are at home.

Concrete can be poured safely in winter. It just needs a bit more planning: picking the right days, getting the mix right and protecting the slab while it gains strength.

We've been supplying concrete across Birmingham and the West Midlands for over 10 years, all year round. This guide sets out what we've learned so you can make the most of your winter window, without the guesswork.

The myth

"You can't lay concrete in winter."

The reality

You **can**. You just need to watch the forecast, prepare the ground, use the right mix and keep it protected for the first few days. Get those right and a winter slab performs just like a summer one.

What's inside

01

Can you pour in winter?

The cold-weather rules of thumb and how we help.

02

Protecting your pour

Site prep and aftercare checklists.

03

The shutdown countdown

What to book and when, from 8 weeks out.

04

Farms, factories & schools

Planning notes for your sector, plus a volume guide.

01 · COLD-WEATHER BASICS

Can you pour concrete in winter?

Yes. Concrete gains strength through a chemical reaction that slows right down in the cold. Winter pours go wrong when fresh concrete freezes before it's strong enough, and that can be avoided with good planning.

The three things the cold affects

1

Frozen ground

Never pour onto frozen or frosty ground. When it thaws it can settle, leaving the slab cracked or unsupported.

2

Slower setting

In the cold, concrete sets and gains strength much more slowly, so finishing and striking formwork take longer.

3

Early frost damage

If water in young concrete freezes, it expands and can damage the surface and the strength for good.

Rules of thumb

- Avoid pouring when it's around **3°C and falling**, or when an overnight frost is forecast and you can't protect the slab.
- Pour in the **morning** so the concrete has the warmest part of the day to get going.
- Keep fresh concrete **protected from frost** until it has gained enough strength. In cold weather that usually means the first few days.
- Leave formwork in place **longer** than you would in summer.
- Never use de-icing salt on new concrete.

How GB Concrete & Pump helps

- **Accelerator admixtures.** We can add accelerators to speed up setting and early strength in cold conditions.
- **Flexible rebooking.** If frost turns up in the forecast, we'll work with you to move your pour.
- **Honest advice.** Talk us through your job and we'll help you plan ground prep, timing and protection.
- **Volumetric mixing on site.** Concrete is mixed fresh where you need it, and you only pay for what you use.

02 · PROTECTING YOUR POUR

Before, during & after: your winter pour checklist

Most winter problems come down to preparation. Print this page and tick it off on site.

THE WEEK BEFORE

- [ ] Check the 7-day forecast and keep an eye on overnight lows
- [ ] Confirm access for the truck or pump
- [ ] Get frost blankets or insulation (or hessian with polythene) on site
- [ ] Have a back-up date in mind
- [ ] Work out your volume (see page 9)

ON THE DAY

- [ ] Clear any frost, ice or snow from the base, formwork and steel
- [ ] Make sure the ground isn't frozen
- [ ] Plan for an early start
- [ ] Have finishing tools and labour ready to go
- [ ] Check whether you need an accelerator when you book

AFTERCARE

- [ ] Cover the slab as soon as the surface allows
- [ ] Keep it covered for the first few days, longer in hard frost
- [ ] Keep traffic and loads off until it has gained strength
- [ ] Leave formwork in longer than in summer
- [ ] No de-icing salt on new concrete

!

When in doubt, move the date

A day's delay costs far less than breaking out and re-laying a frost-damaged slab. If the forecast turns, call us and we'll work out a new slot together.

Is my concrete frost-damaged?

Look out for a weak, flaky or dusty surface, scaling, or a surface that scratches easily once it's thawed. If you're unsure, get it checked before you build on it.

03 · THE SHUTDOWN COUNTDOWN

Your site is empty for days, not weeks. Plan for it.

A Christmas shutdown or school holiday gives you a fixed window, and everyone else wants the same dates. Working back from your shutdown means nothing gets missed.

8+ WEEKS OUT

Scope the job and book your slot

Agree what's being done, get a quote and reserve your delivery or pump dates. The Christmas slots go first.

6 WEEKS OUT

Line up your groundworks

Book contractors, order steel and formwork, and check whether you need any approvals or sign-off.

4 WEEKS OUT

Confirm access & volumes

Walk the site with us if needed. Plan the truck or pump position and confirm m^3.

2 WEEKS OUT

Plan for the weather

Agree a back-up date and get frost protection on order.

1 WEEK OUT

Final checks

Check the forecast daily, finish your sub-base and formwork, and confirm start times.

POUR DAY

Early start, quick cover

Pour, finish, protect, then keep it covered.

KEY WINTER WINDOWS

- **Factory Christmas shutdowns**
  Usually late December into early January
- **School Christmas holidays**
  About two weeks over Christmas and New Year
- **February half-term**
  A week, often good for smaller jobs
- **Farm quiet season**
  November to February, more flexible

Reserve your shutdown slot

Tell us your dates now and we'll hold them for your pour.

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Farms & Agriculture

YOUR WINDOW
Nov – Feb

Winter is when the land's resting and you've got time to fix what's been bothering you all year.

> **Get the yard sorted now, so it's ready for spring and the busy season.**

Typical winter jobs

- Yard and hardstanding repairs or replacement
- Farm tracks and gateways that have turned to mud
- Machinery and storage shed floors
- Livestock building floors and feed areas
- Bases for new buildings, silos and tanks
- Wall footings and foundations

Planning tips

- Farm sites are often remote with soft access. Tell us about gateways, tracks and ground conditions when you book.
- A **concrete pump** can reach over buildings and soft ground, so trucks don't have to churn up the yard.
- **Volumetric trucks** mix on site. That's useful when the job runs across several areas or the final volume is hard to pin down.
- Leave flexibility in your dates. You can usually pick the best-weather day more easily than a business on a fixed shutdown.

Get the spec right

Yards, livestock areas and slabs that take heavy machinery all need the right mix strength and thickness. If you have an engineer's or contractor's spec, send it over. If not, talk to us about the job and we'll point you in the right direction.

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Factories, warehouses & industrial sites

YOUR WINDOW
Christmas shutdown

Your floor might only be empty for a week or two a year. Make it count.

> **No production, no forklifts, no deliveries: the best chance all year to get floor and yard work done.**

Typical shutdown jobs

- Floor slab repairs and replacement sections
- Machine bases and plinths for new equipment
- Loading bay aprons and dock levellers
- Yard, car park and hardstanding repairs
- Foundations for extensions and mezzanines
- Bollards, kerbs and drainage channels

Planning tips

- **Book early.** Shutdown dates clash across the region, so lock in your delivery or pump slot as soon as your dates are confirmed.
- **Pumps** get concrete inside buildings and over obstacles without trucks coming near your plant or racking.
- **Allow time to cure** before the floor goes back into use. Factor this into your restart plan, as cold weather slows strength gain.
- Ask us about **accelerators** if the turnaround is tight.
- Out-of-hours deliveries are available.

Trusted on industrial sites

Our customers include Jaguar Land Rover, Toyota, Veolia, the NHS and National Rail.

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Schools & colleges

YOUR WINDOW
Christmas & Feb half-term

No pupils on site means no disruption and fewer safety headaches.

> **Don't save everything for the summer. Smaller jobs fit the winter holidays well.**

Typical holiday jobs

- Paths, ramps and accessible routes
- Bases for playground equipment, canopies and shelters
- Bases for cycle shelters, sheds and bin stores
- Footings for new modular classrooms
- Playground and car park repairs
- Sports area and court bases

Planning tips

- Holiday windows are short, so **build in a weather back-up day** where you can.
- The February half-term is only a week. It suits smaller pours where the concrete has time to cure before pupils come back.
- A **pump** keeps heavy vehicles away from buildings, fences and play areas.
- Plan cordons and access with your site team so the area stays safe while the concrete cures.
- Business managers and trust estates teams: **book Christmas and February dates together**.

Planning for Easter or summer too?

Use the winter to scope and quote your bigger summer projects, so you're not competing for slots in July.

VOLUME GUIDE

How much concrete do you need?

Concrete is ordered in cubic metres (m^3). Here's the quick way to work it out.

Length (m) × Width (m) × Depth (m) = m^3

Quick reference: slab volume

Slab area	100 mm deep	150 mm deep	200 mm deep
10 m^2 (e.g. 4 × 2.5 m)	1.0 m^3	1.5 m^3	2.0 m^3
25 m^2 (e.g. 5 × 5 m)	2.5 m^3	3.75 m^3	5.0 m^3
50 m^2 (e.g. 10 × 5 m)	5.0 m^3	7.5 m^3	10.0 m^3
100 m^2 (e.g. 10 × 10 m)	10.0 m^3	15.0 m^3	20.0 m^3
250 m^2 (e.g. 25 × 10 m)	25.0 m^3	37.5 m^3	50.0 m^3

Top tips

- Convert mm to metres: 100 mm = 0.1 m
- Ground is rarely perfectly level, so allow a little extra
- Not sure? Volumetric trucks mix on site, so **you only pay for what you use**

Use our online calculator

Enter your measurements and get an instant volume and quote.

Try the calculator →

gbconcreteandpump.co.uk/concrete-calculator

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READY WHEN YOU ARE

Reserve your winter slot.

Tell us your shutdown, half-term or quiet-season dates and what you need doing. We'll come back with a quote and hold your slot.

CALL	**0121 401 1411**
WHATSAPP	**07814 490034**
EMAIL	**info@gbconcreteandpump.co.uk**
INSTANT QUOTE	**gbconcreteandpump.co.uk/concrete-calculator**

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