Minerals Council South Africa

EXAMINATION PAPER

SUBJECT: CERTIFICATE IN ROCK MECHANICS **RMC PAPER 3.2:** SOFT ROCK TABULAR MINING	**EXAMINER:** N KHATHI **MODERATOR:** M MAZIBUKO
SUBJECT CODE: COMRMC **DATE:** 12 MAY 2022 **TIME**: 14H30 TO 17H30	**TOTAL MARKS:** [100] **PASS MARK:** (60%)

NUMBER OF PAGES: 4

THIS IS NOT AN OPENBOOK EXAMINATION – ONLY REFERENCES PROVIDED ARE ALLOWED

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Answer All the Questions**. Answer the questions **legibly** in English.
2. Write your **ID Number** on the outside cover of each book used and on any graph paper or other loose sheets handed in.

NB: Your name **must not** appear on any answer book or loose sheets.

3. Show all calculations **and check calculations on which the answers are based.**
4. Hand-held electronic calculators may be used for calculations. **Reference notes may not be programmed into calculators.**
5. Write **legibly** in ink on the **right-hand page** only – **left hand pages will not be marked**.
6. Illustrate your answers by means of sketches or diagrams wherever possible.
7. **Final answers** must be given to an accuracy which is typical of practical conditions, however, be careful not to use too few decimal places during your calculations, as rounding errors may result in incorrect answers.

NB: Ensure that the correct unit of measure (SI unit) is recorded as marks will be deducted from answers if the incorrect unit is used even if the calculated value is correct.

8. In answering the questions, full advantage should be taken of your practical experience as well as data given.
9. Please note that you are not allowed to contact your examiner or moderator regarding this examination.
10. Cell phones AND OTHER SMART DEVICES are **NOT** allowed in the examination room.

QUESTION 1. SUBSIDENCE

Bundu Coal Mine is extracting No. 4 seam coal from surface using drill and blast mining methods. Underlying the virgin No. 4 seam is the No. 2 seam coal (depth to floor of 70m) that has been mined previously underground using bord and pillar mining methods where pillar centre distances were measured to be 13m x 15m. The mining height and bord width were recorded to be 3m and 6.5m, respectively. Actual subsidence of 0.9m occurred above old underground workings.	
1.1 The Mine Manager requested Rock Engineer's input on whether to have personnel and machinery operating above these old underground workings where 0.9m subsidence was measured; i.e. will the ground surface continue to subside?	(5)
1.2 If the No. 2 seam workings were mined using underground full extraction methods with the panel width of 114.5m. Determine maximum subsidence if the depth to floor of No. 4 seam was 70m.	(4)
1.3 Calculate maximum tilt.	(2)
1.4 Calculate tensile strain.	(2)
1.5 Calculate compressive strain.	(2)
1.6 If the angle of draw was 30 degrees, indicate distance from crest that will be regarded as unstable, at a safety factor of 1.0.	(5)
	[20]

QUESTION 2. PILLAR EXTRACTION

2.1 Snook sizes and respective loads in an underground pillar extraction panel can be used to indicate safe and unsafe areas of the operation. With reference to Figure 1, describe the meaning of **Zone 1**, **Zone 2** and **Zone 3**.	(6)

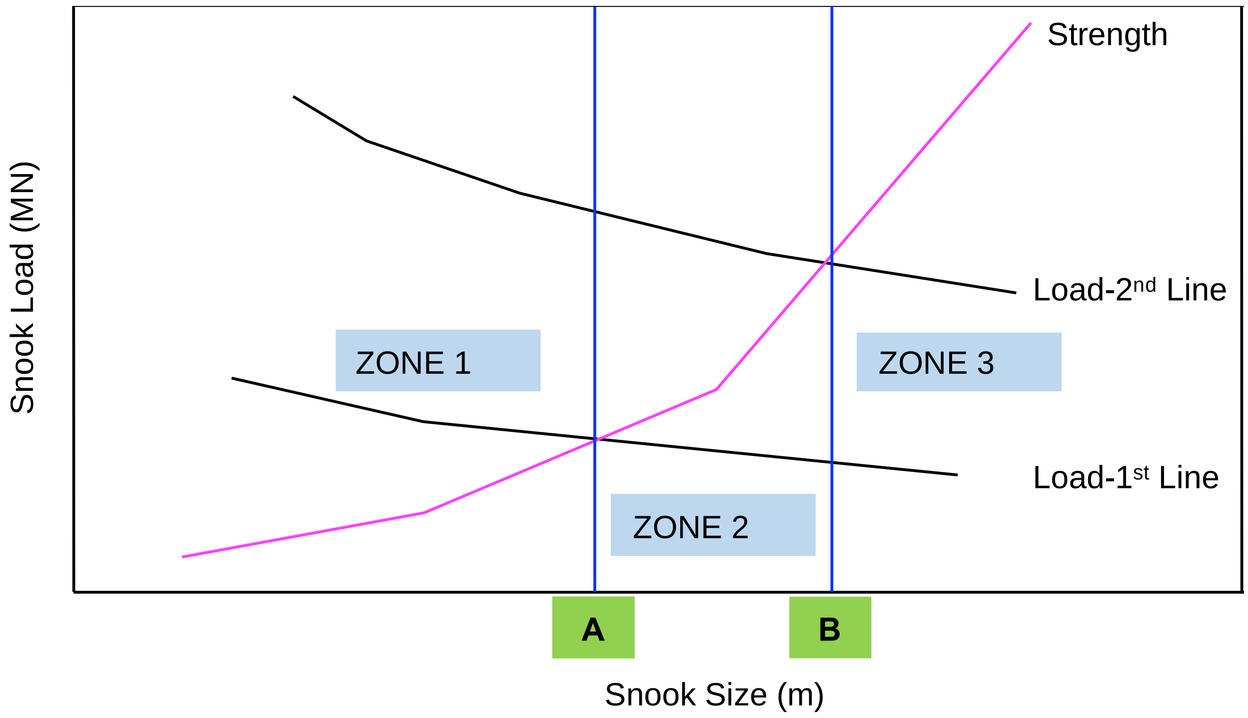


Figure 1 Comparison of snook strength and snook load

2.2	The stability of coal pillars in a partial pillar extraction operation can be described using quadrants. With the use of a diagram, describe these four quadrants or sectors.	(9)
2.3	If pillar failure can occur in two ways; i.e., sudden/ violent or slow/ controlled; with the use of diagrams, describe the concept of stable pillar failure and violent pillar failure.	(5)
		[20]

QUESTION 3. HIGHWALL FAILURE

With reference to Figure 2, answer the questions that follow:

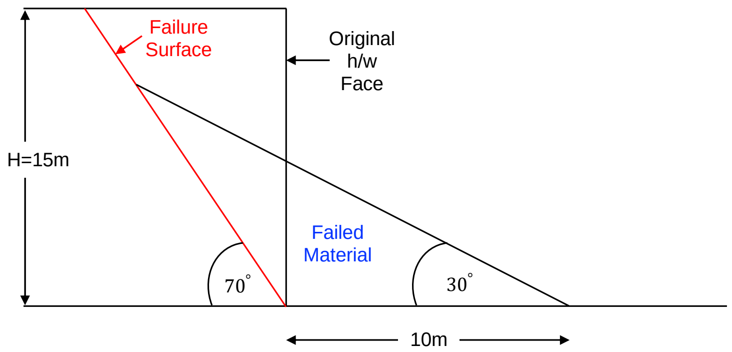


Figure 2 Cross section of a highwall showing failure surface and extent of failed material

3.1	Calculate the volume of failed material.	(10)
3.2	Calculate the volume of in-situ material.	(5)
3.3	Comment on the possibility of further failure along the same sliding/ failure surface.	(4)
3.4	What type of material that is associated with circular failure?	(1)
		[20]

QUESTION 4. ROOF SUPPORT

Popi Colliery is planning to Mine the No. 4 seam using bord and pillar extraction method. As a Rock Engineer for the Mine, you are required to design local support for 7m bord width where a 0.45m thick competent sandstone is underlain by a 0.5m soft/ weak layer. The tensile strengths for a competent sandstone and weak material are 8 MPa and 4 MPa, respectively. With all designs conducted to achieve a safety factor of 1.5;	
4.1 Determine if the competent sandstone unit will be sufficient to support itself and the material underlying it, given that the average density of the overburden material is 2500 kg/m3.	(5)
4.2 Determine spacing of roof bolts given that the average thickness of laminated material that requires suspension are 0.015m (stiff layers) and 0.020m (soft layers) and their combined thickness is 0.5m.	(5)
4.3 If the shear resistance between resin and rock contact is 2 MPa and hole diameter is 28mm, calculate the length of roof bolts that can sufficiently support the laminated material.	(5)
4.4 Given the yield strength of a 20mm diameter roof bolt to be 600 MPa, calculate the maximum spacing of roof bolts to ensure non-failure. Comment on your findings.	(5)
	[20]

QUESTION 5.   ROCKMASS CLASSIFICATION

A 7m permanent mine opening/ excavation is planned on a jointed rock mass with three joint sets with average spacing of 0.5m, 0.3m and 0.2m. A random joint was measured to have a spacing of 0.8m. If the rock has a Uniaxial Compressive Strength (UCS) of 75 MPa, density of 2500 kg/m3 and the excavation is planned at 120m below surface;	
5.1 Determine the required support based on the tunnelling quality index Q.	(11)
5.2 Determine required support based on the Rock Mass Rating (RMR) system.	(6)
5.3 Compare support intensities as determined by the tunnelling index Q and the Rock Mass Rating (RMR) systems.	(3)
***Rock Mass Rating (RMR) Tables – **Appendix 1** *** Q system Tables – **Appendix 2**	
	[20]

TOTAL MARKS = [100]

APPENDIX 1
ROCK MASS RATING SYSTEM

A. CLASSIFICATION PARAMETERS AND THEIR RATINGS

	Parameter		Range of values				
1	Strength of intact rock material	Point-load strength index	>10 MPa	4 - 10 MPa	2 - 4 MPa	1 - 2 MPa	For this low range - uniaxial compressive test is preferred
		Uniaxial comp. strength	>250 MPa	100 - 250 MPa	50 - 100 MPa	25 - 50 MPa	5 - 25 MPa 1 - 5 MPa < 1 MPa
	Rating		15	12	7	4	2 1 0
2	Drill core Quality *RQD*		90% - 100%	75% - 90%	50% - 75%	25% - 50%	< 25%
	Rating		20	17	13	8	3
3	Spacing of discontinuities		> 2 m	0.6 - 2 . m	200 - 600 mm	60 - 200 mm	< 60 mm
	Rating		20	15	10	8	5
4	Condition of discontinuities (See E)		Very rough surfaces Not continuous No separation Unweathered wall rock	Slightly rough surfaces Separation < 1 mm Slightly weathered walls	Slightly rough surfaces Separation < 1 mm Highly weathered walls	Slickensided surfaces or Gouge < 5 mm thick or Separation 1-5 mm Continuous	Soft gouge >5 mm thick or Separation > 5 mm Continuous
	Rating		30	25	20	10	0
5	Ground water	Inflow per 10 m tunnel length (l/m)	None	< 10	10 - 25	25 - 125	> 125
		(Joint water press)/ (Major principal σ)	0	< 0.1	0.1, - 0.2	0.2 - 0.5	> 0.5
		General conditions	Completely dry	Damp	Wet	Dripping	Flowing
	Rating		15	10	7	4	0

B. RATING ADJUSTMENT FOR DISCONTINUITY ORIENTATIONS (See F)

Strike and dip orientations		Very favourable	Favourable	Fair	Unfavourable	Very Unfavourable
Ratings	Tunnels & mines	0	-2	-5	-10	-12
	Foundations	0	-2	-7	-15	-25
	Slopes	0	-5	-25	-50	

C. ROCK MASS CLASSES DETERMINED FROM TOTAL RATINGS

Rating	100 ← 81	80 ← 61	60 ← 41	40 ← 21	< 21
Class number	I	II	III	IV	V
Description	Very good rock	Good rock	Fair rock	Poor rock	Very poor rock

D. MEANING OF ROCK CLASSES

Class number	I	II	III	IV	V
Average stand-up time	20 yrs for 15 m span	1 year for 10 m span	1 week for 5 m span	10 hrs for 2.5 m span	30 min for 1 m span
Cohesion of rock mass (kPa)	> 400	300 - 400	200 - 300	100 - 200	< 100
Friction angle of rock mass (deg)	> 45	35 - 45	25 - 35	15 - 25	< 15

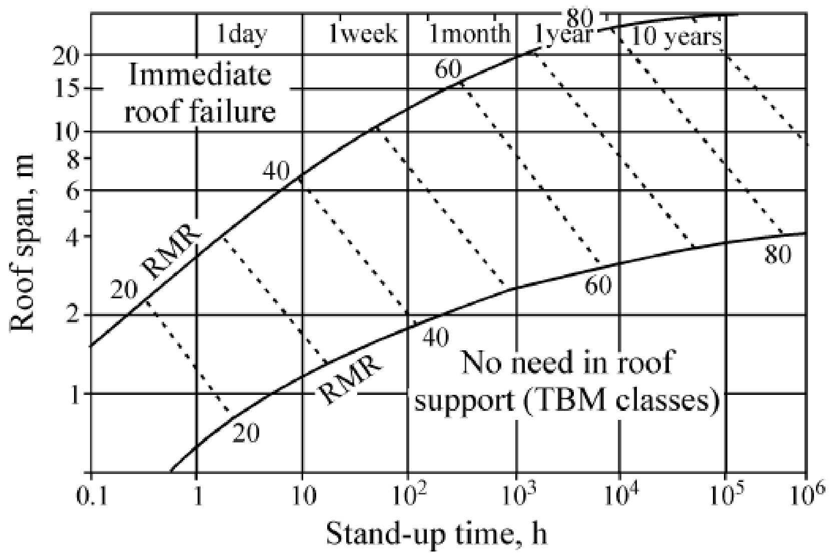
E. GUIDELINES FOR CLASSIFICATION OF DISCONTINUITY conditions

Discontinuity length (persistence) Rating	< 1 m 6	1 - 3 m 4	3 - 10 m 2	10 - 20 m 1	> 20 m 0
Separation (aperture) Rating	None 6	< 0.1 mm 5	0.1 - 1.0 mm 4	1 - 5 mm 1	> 5 mm 0
Roughness Rating	Very rough 6	Rough 5	Slightly rough 3	Smooth 1	Slickensided 0
Infilling (gouge) Rating	None 6	Hard filling < 5 mm 4	Hard filling > 5 mm 2	Soft filling < 5 mm 2	Soft filling > 5 mm 0
Weathering Ratings	Unweathered 6	Slightly weathered 5	Moderately weathered 3	Highly weathered 1	Decomposed 0

F. EFFECT OF DISCONTINUITY STRIKE AND DIP ORIENTATION IN TUNNELLING**

Strike perpendicular to tunnel axis		Strike parallel to tunnel axis	
Drive with dip - Dip 45 - 90°	Drive with dip - Dip 20 - 45°	Dip 45 - 90°	Dip 20 - 45°
Very favourable	Favourable	Very unfavourable	Fair
Drive against dip - Dip 45-90°	Drive against dip - Dip 20-45°	Dip 0-20 - Irrespective of strike°	
Fair	Unfavourable	Fair	

Rock mass class	Excavation	Rock bolts (20 mm diameter, fully grouted)	Shotcrete	Steel sets
I - Very good rock *RMR*: 81-100	Full face, 3 m advance.	Generally no support required except spot bolting.		
II - Good rock *RMR*: 61-80	Full face , 1-1.5 m advance. Complete support 20 m from face.	Locally, bolts in crown 3 m long, spaced 2.5 m with occasional wire mesh.	50 mm in crown where required.	None.
III - Fair rock *RMR*: 41-60	Top heading and bench 1.5-3 m advance in top heading. Commence support after each blast. Complete support 10 m from face.	Systematic bolts 4 m long, spaced 1.5 - 2 m in crown and walls with wire mesh in crown.	50-100 mm in crown and 30 mm in sides.	None.
IV - Poor rock *RMR*: 21-40	Top heading and bench 1.0-1.5 m advance in top heading. Install support concurrently with excavation, 10 m from face.	Systematic bolts 4-5 m long, spaced 1-1.5 m in crown and walls with wire mesh.	100-150 mm in crown and 100 mm in sides.	Light to medium ribs spaced 1.5 m where required.
V – Very poor rock *RMR*: < 20	Multiple drifts 0.5-1.5 m advance in top heading. Install support concurrently with excavation. Shotcrete as soon as possible after blasting.	Systematic bolts 5-6 m long, spaced 1-1.5 m in crown and walls with wire mesh. Bolt invert.	150-200 mm in crown, 150 mm in sides, and 50 mm on face.	Medium to heavy ribs spaced 0.75 m with steel lagging and forepoling if required. Close invert.



APPENDIX 2
Q SYSTEM

DESCRIPTION	VALUE	NOTES
1. ROCK QUALITY DESIGNATION	*RQD*	
A. Very poor	0 - 25	1. Where *RQD* is reported or measured as ≤ 10 (including 0),
B. Poor	25 - 50	a nominal value of 10 is used to evaluate *Q*.
C. Fair	50 - 75	
D. Good	75 - 90	2. *RQD* intervals of 5, i.e. 100, 95, 90 etc. are sufficiently
E. Excellent	90 - 100	accurate.
2. JOINT SET NUMBER	J_n	
A. Massive, no or few joints	0.5 - 1.0	
B. One joint set	2	
C. One joint set plus random	3	
D. Two joint sets	4	
E. Two joint sets plus random	6	
F. Three joint sets	9	1. For intersections use ($3.0 \times J_n$)
G. Three joint sets plus random	12	
H. Four or more joint sets, random, heavily jointed, 'sugar cube', etc.	15	2. For portals use ($2.0 \times J_n$)
J. Crushed rock, earthlike	20	
3. JOINT ROUGHNESS NUMBER	J_r	
a. Rock wall contact		
b. Rock wall contact before 10 cm shear		
A. Discontinuous joints	4	
B. Rough and irregular, undulating	3	
C. Smooth undulating	2	
D. Slickensided undulating	1.5	1. Add 1.0 if the mean spacing of the relevant joint set is
E. Rough or irregular, planar	1.5	greater than 3 m.
F. Smooth, planar	1.0	
G. Slickensided, planar	0.5	2. J_r = 0.5 can be used for planar, slickensided joints having
c. No rock wall contact when sheared		lineations, provided that the lineations are oriented for
H. Zones containing clay minerals thick enough to prevent rock wall contact	1.0 (nominal)	minimum strength.
J. Sandy, gravely or crushed zone thick enough to prevent rock wall contact	1.0 (nominal)	
4. JOINT ALTERATION NUMBER	J_a	ϕr degrees (approx.)
a. Rock wall contact		
A. Tightly healed, hard, non-softening, impermeable filling	0.75	1. Values of ϕr, the residual friction angle, are intended as an approximate guide
B. Unaltered joint walls, surface staining only	1.0	25 - 35 — to the mineralogical properties of the
C. Slightly altered joint walls, non-softening mineral coatings, sandy particles, clay-free disintegrated rock, etc.	2.0	25 - 30 — alteration products, if present.
D. Silty-, or sandy-clay coatings, small clay-fraction (non-softening)	3.0	20 - 25
E. Softening or low-friction clay mineral coatings, i.e. kaolinite, mica. Also chlorite, talc, gypsum and graphite etc., and small quantities of swelling clays. (Discontinuous coatings, 1 - 2 mm or less)	4.0	8 - 16

DESCRIPTION	VALUE	NOTES	
4, JOINT ALTERATION NUMBER	J_a	ϕr degrees (approx.)	
b. Rock wall contact before 10 cm shear			
F. Sandy particles, clay-free, disintegrating rock etc.	4.0	25 - 30	
G. Strongly over-consolidated, non-softening clay mineral fillings (continuous < 5 mm thick)	6.0	16 - 24	
H. Medium or low over-consolidation, softening clay mineral fillings (continuous < 5 mm thick)	8.0	12 - 16	
J. Swelling clay fillings, i.e. montmorillonite, (continuous < 5 mm thick). Values of J_a depend on percent of swelling clay-size particles, and access to water.	8.0 - 12.0	6 - 12	
c. No rock wall contact when sheared			
K. Zones or bands of disintegrated or crushed	6.0		
L. rock and clay (see G, H and J for clay	8.0		
M. conditions)	8.0 - 12.0	6 - 24	
N. Zones or bands of silty- or sandy-clay, small clay fraction, non-softening	5.0		
O. Thick continuous zones or bands of clay	10.0 - 13.0		
P. & R. (see G.H and J for clay conditions)	6.0 - 24.0		
5. JOINT WATER REDUCTION	J_w	approx. water pressure (kgf/cm^2)	
A. Dry excavation or minor inflow i.e. < 5 l/m locally	1.0	< 1.0	
B. Medium inflow or pressure, occasional outwash of joint fillings	0.66	1.0 - 2.5	
C. Large inflow or high pressure in competent rock with unfilled joints	0.5	2.5 - 10.0	1. Factors C to F are crude estimates; increase J_w if drainage installed.
D. Large inflow or high pressure	0.33	2.5 - 10.0	
E. Exceptionally high inflow or pressure at blasting, decaying with time	0.2 - 0.1	> 10	2. Special problems caused by ice formation are not considered.
F. Exceptionally high inflow or pressure	0.1 - 0.05	> 10	
6. STRESS REDUCTION FACTOR		*SRF*	
a. Weakness zones intersecting excavation, which may cause loosening of rock mass when tunnel is excavated			
A. Multiple occurrences of weakness zones containing clay or chemically disintegrated rock, very loose surrounding rock any depth)		10.0	1. Reduce these values of *SRF* by 25 - 50% but only if the relevant shear zones influence do not intersect the excavation
B. Single weakness zones containing clay, or chemically dis-tegrated rock (excavation depth < 50 m)		5.0	
C. Single weakness zones containing clay, or chemically dis-tegrated rock (excavation depth > 50 m)		2.5	
D. Multiple shear zones in competent rock (clay free), loose surrounding rock (any depth)		7.5	
E. Single shear zone in competent rock (clay free). (depth of excavation < 50 m)		5.0	
F. Single shear zone in competent rock (clay free). (depth of excavation > 50 m)		2.5	
G. Loose open joints, heavily jointed or 'sugar cube', (any depth)		5.0	

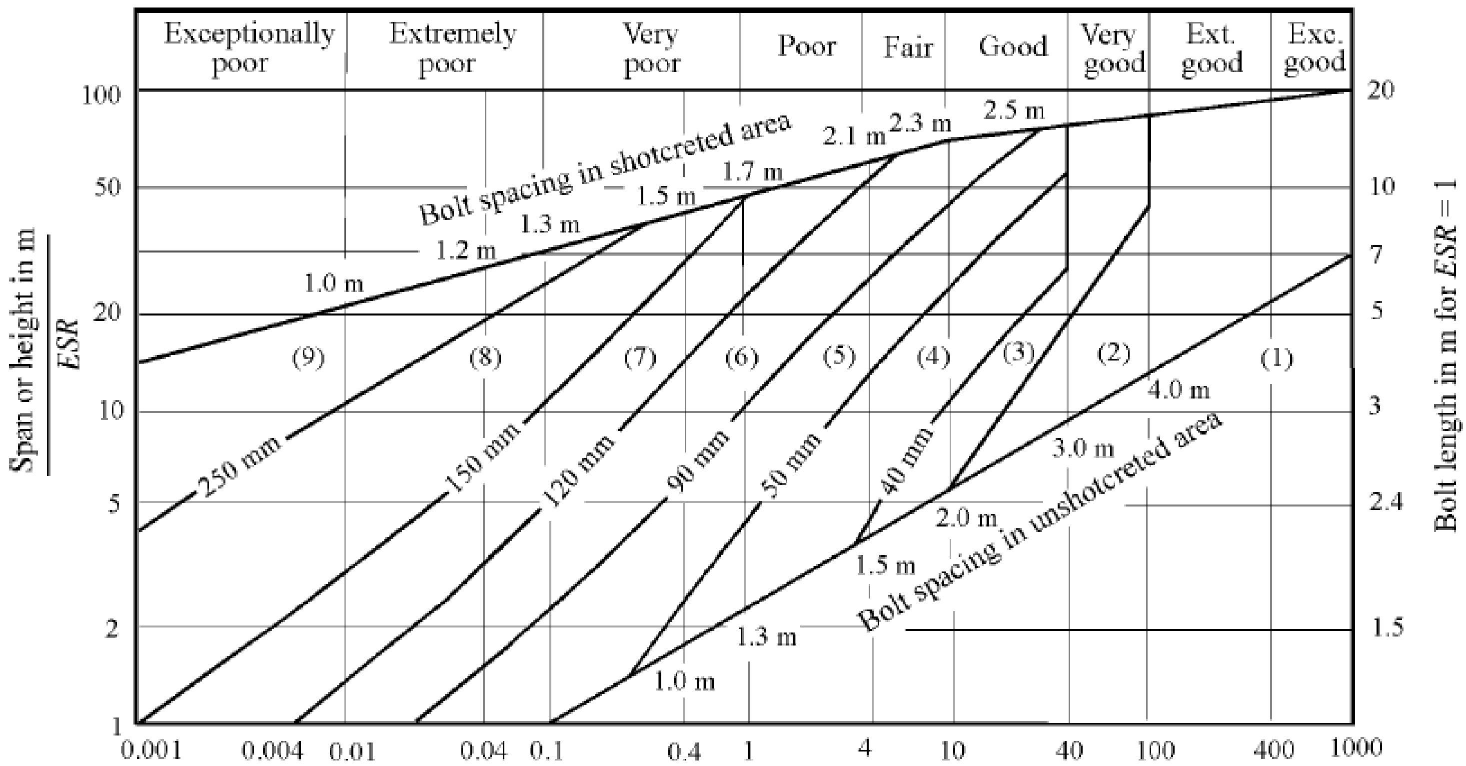
DESCRIPTION	VALUE			NOTES
6. STRESS REDUCTION FACTOR			*SRF*	
b. Competent rock, rock stress problems				
	σ_c/σ_1	$\sigma_t\sigma_1$		2. For strongly anisotropic virgin stress field (if measured): when $5 \le \sigma_1/\sigma_3 \le 10$, reduce σ_c to $0.8\sigma_c$ and σ_t to $0.8\sigma_t$. When $\sigma_1/\sigma_3 > 10$, reduce σ_c and σ_t to $0.6\sigma_c$ and $0.6\sigma_t$, where σ_c = unconfined compressive strength, and σ_t = tensile strength (point load) and σ_1 and σ_3 are the major and minor principal stresses.
H. Low stress, near surface	> 200	> 13	2.5	
J. Medium stress	200 - 10	13 - 0.66	1.0	
K. High stress, very tight structure (usually favourable to stability, may be unfavourable to wall stability)	10 - 5	0.66 - 0.33	0.5 - 2	
L. Mild rockburst (massive rock)	5 - 2.5	0.33 - 0.16	5 - 10	
M. Heavy rockburst (massive rock)	< 2.5	< 0.16	10 - 20	3. Few case records available where depth of crown below surface is less than span width. Suggest *SRF* increase from 2.5 to 5 for such cases (see H).
c. Squeezing rock, plastic flow of incompetent rock under influence of high rock pressure				
N. Mild squeezing rock pressure			5 - 10	
O. Heavy squeezing rock pressure			10 - 20	
d. Swelling rock, chemical swelling activity depending on presence of water				
P. Mild swelling rock pressure			5 - 10	
R. Heavy swelling rock pressure			10 - 15	

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE USE OF THESE TABLES

When making estimates of the rock mass Quality (*Q*), the following guidelines should be followed in addition to the notes listed in the tables:

1. When borehole core is unavailable, *RQD* can be estimated from the number of joints per unit volume, in which the number of joints per metre for each joint set are added. A simple relationship can be used to convert this number to *RQD* for the case of clay free rock masses: $RQD = 115 - 3.3 J_v$ (approx.), where J_v = total number of joints per m^3 ($0 < RQD < 100$ for $35 > J_v > 4.5$).
2. The parameter J_n representing the number of joint sets will often be affected by foliation, schistosity, slaty cleavage or bedding etc. If strongly developed, these parallel 'joints' should obviously be counted as a complete joint set. However, if there are few 'joints' visible, or if only occasional breaks in the core are due to these features, then it will be more appropriate to count them as 'random' joints when evaluating J_n.
3. The parameters J_r and J_a (representing shear strength) should be relevant to the weakest significant joint set or clay filled discontinuity in the given zone. However, if the joint set or discontinuity with the minimum value of J_r/J_a is favourably oriented for stability, then a second, less favourably oriented joint set or discontinuity may sometimes be more significant, and its higher value of J_r/J_a should be used when evaluating *Q*. The value of J_r/J_a should in fact relate to the surface most likely to allow failure to initiate.
4. When a rock mass contains clay, the factor *SRF* appropriate to loosening loads should be evaluated. In such cases the strength of the intact rock is of little interest. However, when jointing is minimal and clay is completely absent, the strength of the intact rock may become the weakest link, and the stability will then depend on the ratio rock-stress/rock-strength. A strongly anisotropic stress field is unfavourable for stability and is roughly accounted for as in note 2 in the table for stress reduction factor evaluation.
5. The compressive and tensile strengths (σ_c and σ_t) of the intact rock should be evaluated in the saturated condition if this is appropriate to the present and future in situ conditions. A very conservative estimate of the strength should be made for those rocks that deteriorate when exposed to moist or saturated conditions.

Excavation category		*ESR*
A	Temporary mine openings.	3-5
B	Permanent mine openings, water tunnels for hydro power (excluding high pressure penstocks), pilot tunnels, drifts and headings for large excavations.	1.6
C	Storage rooms, water treatment plants, minor road and railway tunnels, surge chambers, access tunnels.	1.3
D	Power stations, major road and railway tunnels, civil defence chambers, portal intersections.	1.0
E	Underground nuclear power stations, railway stations, sports and public facilities, factories.	0.8



Rock mass quality $Q = \frac{RQD}{Jn} \times \frac{Jr}{Ja} \times \frac{Jw}{SRF}$

REINFORCEMENT CATEGORIES

1) Unsupported
2) Spot bolting
3) Systematic bolting
4) Systematic bolting with 40-100 mm unreinforced shotcrete
5) Fibre reinforced shotcrete, 50 - 90 mm, and bolting
6) Fibre reinforced shotcrete, 90 - 120 mm, and bolting
7) Fibre reinforced shotcrete, 120 - 150 mm, and bolting
8) Fibre reinforced shotcrete, > 150 mm, with reinforced ribs of shotcrete and bolting
9) Cast concrete lining