

Contents

1	TRENDS TOWARD ADVANCED ANALYSIS	1
	<i>J. Y. Richard Liew and W. F. Chen</i>	
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Design Formats	2
1.2.1	Allowable Stress Design (ASD)	3
1.2.2	Plastic Design (PD)	3
1.2.3	Load and Resistance Factor Design (LRFD)	4
1.2.4	Advanced Analysis Format	4
1.3	Organization	6
1.4	Elastic Methods of Analysis	6
1.4.1	AISC-LRFD Beam-Columns Interaction Equations	6
1.4.2	The Effective Length Factor	8
1.4.3	Second-Order Elastic Analysis for Frame Design	12
	Recommended Design Procedure	13
1.5	Semi-Rigid Frame Design	16
1.5.1	Design Provisions and Connection Classifications	16
1.5.2	Connection Data Base	19
	Goverdhan Data Base	19
	Nethercot Data Base	19
	Kishi and Chen Data Base	20
1.5.3	Simplified Analysis/Design Method	22
1.5.4	Direct Second-Order Analysis Methods	25
1.6	Second-Order Inelastic Analyses	26
1.6.1	Plastic-Zone Method	26
1.6.2	Elastic-Plastic Hinge Method	27
1.6.3	Notional Load Plastic Hinge Method	28
1.6.4	Refined-Plastic Hinge Analysis	31
	Analysis of Simple Portal Frames	33
	Analysis of a Six-Story Frame	35
1.7	Benchmarking Verification	40
1.8	Conclusions	42
	References	43
2	SECOND-ORDER ELASTIC ANALYSIS OF FRAMES	47
	<i>Yoshiaki Goto</i>	
2.1	Introduction	47
2.2	Second-Order Theory for In-Plane Frames	48

2.3	Stiffness Equations for Beam-Column Member	54
2.4	Modeling of Semi-Rigid Connections	60
2.5	Modified Secant Stiffness Equation with Connection Flexibility	63
2.6	Solution Procedure for Nonlinear Stiffness Equations	67
2.7	Numerical Examples	69
2.8	Computer Program	75
2.9	User's Manual	77
	Acknowledgment	83
	References	89
3	SEMI-RIGID CONNECTIONS	91
	<i>Norimitsu Kishi</i>	
3.1	Introduction	91
3.2	Types of Semi-Rigid Connections	92
3.2.1	Single Web-Angle Connections/Single Plate Connections	92
3.2.2	Double Web-Angle Connections	93
3.2.3	Top- and Seat-Angle Connections with Double Web Angle	93
3.2.4	Top- and Seat-Angle Connections	93
3.2.5	Extended End-Plate Connections/Flush End-Plate Connections	93
3.2.6	Header-Plate Connections	98
3.3	Modeling of Connections	98
3.3.1	General Remarks	98
3.3.2	Frye-Morris Polynomial Model	99
3.3.3	Modified Exponential Model	100
3.3.4	Three-Parameter Power Model	101
3.4	Connection Data Base	104
3.5	Parameter Definition for Connection Type	105
3.5.1	Single Web-Angle Connections/Single Plate Connections	105
3.5.2	Double Web-Angle Connections	107
3.5.3	Top- and Seat-Angle Connections with Double Web Angle	107
3.5.4	Top- and Seat-Angle Connections	114
3.5.5	Extended End-Plate Connections	119
3.5.6	Flush End-Plate Connections	123
3.5.7	Header-Plate Connections	125
3.6	Steel Connection Data Bank Program	127
3.6.1	Outline of SCDB	127
3.6.2	User's Manual for Program SCDB	129
3.6.3	Examples	130
	References	135

4	SECOND-ORDER PLASTIC HINGE ANALYSIS OF FRAMES	139
	<i>J. Y. Liew and W. F. Chen</i>	
	Notations	139
4.1	Introduction	140
4.2	Assumptions and Scope	142
4.3	Modeling of Elastic Frame Elements	144
4.4	Modeling of Elastic Truss Elements	148
4.5	Second-Order Elastic-Plastic Hinge Analysis	149
4.5.1	Cross-Section Plastic Strength	150
4.5.2	Modification of Element Stiffness for the Presence of Plastic Hinges	151
4.5.3	Illustrative Example	153
4.6	Second-Order Refined Plastic Hinge Analysis	154
4.6.1	Tangent Modulus Approach	155
4.6.2	Two-Surface Stiffness Degradation Model	158
Effect of Plastification at End A Only	159	
Effect of Plastification at End B Only	161	
Effect of Plastification at Both Ends	161	
4.6.3	Illustrative Examples	162
4.7	Analysis of Semi-Rigid Frames	163
4.7.1	Modeling of Connections	163
4.7.2	Modification of Element Stiffness to Account for End Connections	164
4.8	Numerical Implementation	167
4.9	PHINGE — A Second-Order Plastic Hinge Based Analysis Program	168
4.9.1	Program Overall View	168
4.9.2	Input Instructions	169
4.9.3	Examples	174
	References	193
5	PLASTIC-ZONE ANALYSIS OF BEAM-COLUMNS AND PORTAL FRAMES	195
	<i>S. P. Zhou and W. F. Chen</i>	
5.1	Introduction	195
5.2	Analysis of In-Plane Beam-Columns	196
5.2.1	Principle of Analysis	196
Analytical Conditions	196	
Analytical Method	198	
5.2.2	Analytical Steps	200
5.2.3	Flow Chart of BCIN	207
5.2.4	User's Manual of BCIN	208
Input Data	208	
Output Data	210	
How to Determine the Input Data	212	

5.2.5	Sample Problems of BCIN	213
5.3	Analysis of Portal Braced Frames	215
5.3.1	Principle of Analysis	215
5.3.2	Analytical Steps	218
5.3.3	Flow Chart of FRAMP	220
5.3.4	User's Manual of FRAMP	220
	Input Data	221
	Output Data	222
	Frame Failures	225
	The Case with $BAT = 0$	227
5.3.5	Sample Problems of FRAMP	227
5.4	Analysis of Portal Unbraced Frames	232
5.4.1	Principle of Analysis	232
	Structure and Load of the Unbraced Frames	232
	Second-Order Elastic Analysis of the Unbraced Frames	232
	Second-Order Inelastic Analysis	235
5.4.2	Analytical Steps	236
5.4.3	Flow Chart of FRAMH	237
5.4.4	User's Manual of FRAMH	238
	Input Data	238
	Output Data	240
	Frame Failures	241
5.4.5	Sample Problems for FRAMH	241
References	243
Appendix A:	Sample Problems of BCIN (File "OBC")	244
Appendix B:	Sample Problems of FRAMP (File "OFP")	246
Appendix C:	Sample Problems of FRAMH (File "OFH")	252

6 PLASTIC-ZONE ANALYSIS OF FRAMES

Murray J. Clark

6.1	Introduction	259
6.2	Historical Sketch	260
6.3	Finite Element Formulation	262
6.3.1	General	262
6.3.2	Strain-Displacement Relations	264
6.3.3	Stress-Strain Relations	266
	Stress Resultants	267
6.3.4	The Principle of Virtual Displacements	269
6.3.5	Discretization of the Virtual Work Equation	270
	Element Geometric Description	270
	Strain-Displacement Matrices	274
	Equilibrium Equations	276
6.3.6	Solving the Nonlinear Equilibrium Equations	276

6.3.7	Transformation, Condensation, and Recovery of Nodal Variables	280
	Transformation of Nodal Variables	280
	Condensation of Nodal Variables	281
	Recovery of Nodal Variables	282
	Internal Rotational Releases	282
6.4	Cross-Sectional Analysis	283
6.4.1	General	283
6.4.2	Numerical Integration Procedure	284
6.4.3	Numerical Integration of Stress Resultants	285
6.4.4	Numerical Integration of the Tangent Modulus Matrix	286
6.5	Some Aspects of the Computer Program Implementation	286
6.5.1	General	286
6.5.2	Node Numbering and Numerical Integration	287
6.5.3	Nonlinear Formulations and Incremental-Iterative Strategies	287
6.5.4	Material Inelasticity	288
6.5.5	Computer Requirements	289
6.6	Investigation of Analysis Parameters	290
6.6.1	Introductory Comments	290
6.6.2	I-Section Column	290
6.6.3	Beam with Fully Constrained Ends	292
6.7	Analysis of Beam-Columns	294
6.8	European Calibration Frames	296
6.8.1	General	296
6.8.2	Rectangular Portal Frame with Fixed Bases	296
	Comments on Sensitivity of Analysis Results to Modeling Assumptions	298
6.8.3	Pitched-Roof Portal Frame	299
6.8.4	Six-Story Two-Bay Frame	300
6.9	A North American Calibration Frame	303
6.10	Australian Calibration Frames	304
6.10.1	Rigid-Jointed Truss	304
6.10.2	Stressed-Arch Frame	308
6.11	Application to Engineering Practice	312
6.11.1	Current Practice	312
6.11.2	Future Research	315
6.12	Summary and Concluding Remarks	316
References	317

7 BENCHMARK PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Shouji Toma and W. F. Chen

7.1	Introduction	321
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7.2	Requirements for Benchmark Problems	322
7.2.1	Physical Attributes and Behavioral Phenomena of Frames	322
7.2.2	Criteria for Selecting Calibration Frames	323
7.2.3	Required Information	324
7.2.4	Some Comments on the Analytical Assumptions	325
	Constitutive Relations of Materials	325
	Residual Stresses (Material Imperfection)	325
	Geometrical Imperfections	327
	Joint Conditions	328
7.3	North American Calibration Frames	328
7.3.1	Introduction	328
7.3.2	Beam-Columns	329
7.3.3	Portal Frames	333
7.3.4	Interaction Curves for Portal Frames	336
7.4	European Calibration Frames	338
7.4.1	Introduction	338
7.4.2	Analytical Assumptions	343
	Stress-Strain Relation	345
	Residual Stresses	345
	Geometrical Imperfections	345
7.4.3	A Portal Frame	347
7.4.4	A Gable Frame	348
7.4.5	A Six-Story, Two-Bay Frame	349
7.5	Japanese Calibration Frames	351
7.5.1	Introduction	351
7.5.2	Full-Size Test of Portal Frame	352
	Test Specimens	352
	Loading Procedures	353
	Test Results	355
	Monotonic Loading	355
	Cyclic Loading	355
	Theoretical Analysis	355
7.5.3	One-Quarter Scaled Test of Portal Frames	359
	Test Specimens	359
	Loading Procedures	365
	Test Results of One-Story Frames	365
	Test Results of Two-Story Frames	365
	Theoretical Analysis	370
	References	372
	Index	375

1: Trends Toward Advanced Analysis

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1.1 Introduction

Since the publication of the two-volume book on *Theory of Beam-Columns* (Chen and Atsuta, 1976 and 1977), and the subsequent books and monograph related to *Stability Design of Frames* (Chen and Lui, 1986 and 1991; SSRC, 1992), our understanding of certain aspects of the behavior and design of steel members and frames has increased considerably and many extensions and advancements have been made during the past 10 years.

The advent of limit-states specifications has resulted in more explicit and more rational consideration of the combined effects of inelasticity and stability at maximum strength levels. Since limit-states design is based directly on factored loads and limits of resistance, it is expected that structural systems and their members will behave nonlinearly before their capacity is reached. Of course, the most direct approach for structural design is to model all the significant nonlinear effects in the analysis. However, until recently, rigorous consideration of system as well as member strength and stability in the analysis of large-scale structural system were not feasible and practical. As a result, contemporary specification provisions have been based primarily on simpler methods of analysis and member interaction equations which account approximately for the interaction of strength and stability between the member and structural system.

Recently, the advancement in computer hardware, particularly in the computing and graphics performance of personal computers and workstations, is making advanced methods of analysis more and more feasible for design use. This advancement has made it possible for the engineer to adopt the limit-states design philosophy in a wider perspective. Advanced analysis techniques hold the promise of more realistic prediction of load effects and overall structural performance, and therefore in certain cases, yield greater economic and more uniform safety. The two task groups in the U.S. — the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC) Technical Committee 117 on *Inelastic Analysis and Design* and the Structural Stability Research Council (SSRC) Task Group 29 on *Second-Order Inelastic Analysis for Frame Design* — are