

APPENDIX 8.7

VIBRATION TERMINOLOGY

Ground Borne Vibrations

For any source of vibration on or near the surface of the ground, energy propagates away from the source via:

- a) Elastic body (or compression) waves – which radiate energy into the ground in all directions
- b) Surface (or shear) waves – which carry energy along the ground surface, caused when body waves are reflected back into the ground at the ground-surface interface

Thus, at any point away from that source, the ground motion is the sum of all the wave motions at that point. When wave motion has been generated, the waves will be attenuated as they travel away from the source. The two main mechanisms for attenuation are:

- a) Enlargement of the wavefront as the distance from the source increases, and
- b) Internal damping of the transmitting medium (the ground)

Ground borne vibration is therefore made up of a combination of different waves, travelling in different directions, at different speeds and at different frequencies. The frequency component of the vibration will affect the rate at which attenuation occurs since the internal damping of the ground is frequency dependent.

Since vibration enters buildings through the foundations, the hard structure of the building is normally affected to a greater degree than by air borne vibration. Often ground borne vibrations are more noticeable when standing or sitting near the middle of suspended wooden floors.

Ground Borne Vibration Measurement Units

Ground borne vibration is caused when the individual particles making up the strata are caused to oscillate by the passage of a pressure wave. The resulting vibration can be summarized in terms of 4 main parameters:

- a) **Velocity** – how fast the particles move when they are oscillating. Since the velocity of these particles continually change as the pressure wave passes the most useful value that is often reported is the maximum or peak particle velocity (PPV). PPVs are usually expressed in terms of ms^{-1} or mms^{-1} .
- b) **Acceleration** – is the rate at which the particle velocity changes during oscillation. It is usually measured in ms^{-2} mms^{-2} or “g’s”. 1g is that acceleration imparted to an object by the earth’s gravitational pull and is approximately 9.81 ms^{-2} .
- c) **Displacement** – is the distance moved by oscillating particles. This is usually very small and measured in mm or even μm .
- d) **Frequency** – is the number of oscillations per second which a particle undergoes due to the passage of a vibration wave. It is measured in cycles per second or Hertz (Hz).

The movement of particles induced to oscillate by vibration waves are usually measured in three mutually perpendicular directions to fully describe the vibration intensity, as particles will be oscillating in three dimensions. These are:

- a) **Longitudinal** – back and forth particle movement in the same direction that the vibration wave is travelling.

- b) **Vertical** – up and down movement perpendicular to the direction the vibration wave is travelling.
- c) **Transverse** – left and right particle movement perpendicular to the direction the vibration wave is travelling.