

**Tubular Design Guide 20:  
Background and design basis**

**by**

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**and**

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**first edition - 2014**



AUSTRALIAN STEEL INSTITUTE  
(ABN)/ACN (94) 000 973 839

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FIRST EDITION 2014 (LIMIT STATES)

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Key, Peter W.

Tubular Design Guide 20: Background and design basis / Peter W. Key, Arun A. Syam

ISBN 978 1 921476 29 7 (pbk.).

Series: Structural tubular connection series.

Includes bibliographical references.

Steel, Structural—Standards - Australia.

Structural engineering.

Syam, Arun A.

Australian Steel Institute.

624.1821021894

Also in this series:

Tubular Design Guide 21: Bolted bracing connections

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Tubular Design Guide 23: Plate fitments

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# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>
<i>List of figures</i>	<i>iv</i>	4.4.2 Flat bar material	27
<i>List of tables</i>	<i>v</i>	4.4.3 Design yield stress for Australian produced plate material	27
<i>Preface</i>	<i>vi</i>	4.5 Bolt types and bolting categories	28
<i>About the authors</i>	<i>vii</i>	4.6 Properties of bolts	29
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>viii</i>	4.7 Weld types	31
1 CONCEPT OF DESIGN GUIDES	1	4.8 Properties of welds	33
1.1 Background	1	4.9 International material sourcing	36
2 BASIS OF SSHS CONNECTION DESIGN TO AS 4100	2	4.9.1 Background	36
2.1 General considerations	2	4.9.2 Material perspectives	36
2.2 Forms of construction	3	4.9.3 Product perspectives	37
2.3 Connection design models	5	4.9.4 Bolt sourcing	37
2.4 Connection characteristics	6	4.9.5 Welding consumables	38
2.5 Connection terminology	9	4.9.6 Product compliance	38
2.6 Fatigue considerations	10	4.9.7 Sample tests of imported product	39
2.7 Seismic considerations	11	4.9.8 Third-party product certification	40
3 BACKGROUND TO SSHS IMPLEMENTATION	12	5 DESIGN CAPACITIES	42
3.1 Advantages of SSHS for construction	12	5.1 Bolt design capacity	42
3.2 Australian production	13	5.2 Weld design capacity–Fillet welds	44
3.2.1 Background	13	5.3 Weld design capacity – Pre-engineered welds	47
3.2.2 Cold-formed manufacturing process	13	5.3.1 Stress distribution in profiled fully welded SSHS connections	47
3.2.3 Section availability	14	5.3.2 Prequalified fillet weld throat thickness	47
3.2.4 Material properties	14	5.3.3 Weld matching	49
3.3 International design context	15	5.4 Other connector types	54
3.4 Australian design context	16	5.5 Section design capacity	56
3.5 International research	17	5.5.1 Design section capacity in axial tension	56
3.6 Books and design manuals	18	5.5.2 Design section capacity in axial compression	56
4 MATERIAL AND SECTION PROPERTIES	19	5.5.3 Design section moment capacity	57
4.1 Properties of Australian SSHS	19	5.5.4 Design shear capacity of a web	57
4.1.1 Applicable standards	19	5.6 Component design capacities	59
4.1.2 Material properties	19	5.6.1 General	59
4.2 Australian SSHS section sizes	20	5.6.2 Design capacity in axial tension for rectangular component	59
4.3 Design aspects related to Australian SSHS	21	5.6.3 Design shear capacity of rectangular component	60
4.3.1 Influence of higher strength steel on SSHS connection design	21	5.6.4 Design moment capacity of rectangular component	60
4.3.2 Influence of yield to ultimate tensile strength ratio on SSHS connection design	21	5.6.5 Design capacity in axial compression for rectangular component	61
4.3.3 Design yield stress for Australian produced SSHS	22	5.6.6 Design capacity against rupture due to block shear failure for rectangular component	62
4.3.4 Section classification	23		
4.4 Properties of plate materials	26		
4.4.1 Plate material	26		



	<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>
6 DESIGN ACTIONS	65	8.4 Truss design	81
6.1 Minimum design actions	65	8.4.1 Effective length for compression members	81
7 DETAILING AND STANDARDISATION	67	8.4.2 Guidance on member selection	81
7.1 Detailing of SSHS connections	67	8.4.3 Suggested truss design procedure	82
7.1.1 Drainage and corrosion	67	8.5 Truss deflections	84
7.1.2 Galvanizing	68	8.5.1 Truss deflections	84
7.1.3 Recommended weld details	68	9 FUTURE DESIGN GUIDES	85
7.1.4 General design considerations	69	9.1 Planned future design guides	85
7.2 Tolerances	71	10 REFERENCES	86
7.3 Standardisation and rationalisation	72	11 NOTATION AND ABBREVIATIONS	90
8 TRUSS DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS	74	APPENDICES	
8.1 Context	74	A SSHS section sizes	100
8.1.1 Scope	74	B Limcon software	114
8.2 Classification of connections	75	C ASI Design Guide comment form	115
8.2.1 Connection classification	75		
8.3 Truss analysis	79		
8.3.1 Analysis model configuration	79		

## LIST OF FIGURES

	<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>
Figure 2.1 Typical rigid connections	4	Figure 5.8 Rectangular connection component geometry	59
Figure 2.2 Typical semi-rigid connections	4	Figure 5.9 Rectangular component bent about major axis	61
Figure 2.3 Typical simple connections	4	Figure 5.10 Rectangular component bent about minor axis	61
Figure 2.4 Moment-rotation characteristics of typical connections	6	Figure 5.11 Examples of block shear failure in components	62
Figure 2.5 Boundaries for stiffness calculation for beam-to- column connections	7	Figure 5.12 Block shear area in components	63
Figure 2.6 Definition of connection elements	9	Figure 5.13 Block shear failure planes inclined to the direction of the applied load	64
Figure 3.1 Typical cold-formed SSHS manufacturing process	14	Figure 7.1 Detailing of open and sealed connections	67
Figure 4.1 Definition of element width for RHS flanges	25	Figure 7.2 Recommended weld details	69
Figure 4.2 Common structural weld types in AS 4100	31	Figure 7.3 Definition of gap and overlap connections	70
Figure 5.1 Design throat thickness of fillet welds	46	Figure 7.4 Definition of bolt hole detailing dimensions	72
Figure 5.2 Non-uniform stress distribution around connected face of SSHS brace member	47	Figure 8.1 Various types of truss configuration	74
Figure 5.3 Resolution of forces on throat of fillet weld	48	Figure 8.2 Various connection types	75
Figure 5.4 Connection configurations for checking weld matching	51	Figure 8.3 Examples of connection classification	77
Figure 5.5 Lindapter hollobolt configuration	54	Figure 8.4 Classification of KT connections	78
Figure 5.6 Huck ultra-twist process	54	Figure 8.5 Planar truss connection modelling assumptions	80
Figure 5.7 Flowdrill process	55	Figure 8.6 Limits of nodding eccentricity	80



### **3 BACKGROUND TO SSHS IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **3.1 Advantages of SSHS for construction**

Structural steel hollow sections (SSHS) have a long history of project implementation and an equally long history of development as a high performance building product. This pedigree is reflected in the fact that compared to other steel products, the worldwide consumption of welded steel tubular products is increasing in a market share sense if not an overall sense.

There are numerous reasons for the increased focus on and use of SSHS, and many speak towards the advantages of SSHS for production, supply and building and infrastructure construction. These include:

1. A world steel industry moving from the traditional production of hot-rolled sections and plate towards coil and strip production with attendant advantages of easier delivery from steel mill to manufacturing plant and the capacity to supply pre-coated (galvanized or primer-painted) product in some cases.
2. Improved manufacturing technology which facilitates enhancement of the overall performance of the product.
3. Structural steel design Standards which permit design of cold-formed SSHS sections along with hot-rolled sections are now available in most countries around the world (Refs. 1, 9, 12, 13, 63). These Standards have been continually improved, enabling the design of cold-formed SSHS members and connections to take advantage of the increased performance produced by the manufacturing process and inherent in the products.
4. The inherent structural efficiency of the hollow section shape, which places material at the maximum distance from the centroid of the section. Increased compression load capacity, torsional strength and stiffness and lateral stability per unit weight are direct advantages of the hollow section shape and lead to structures that, on a per unit area basis, are amongst the lightest that can be designed.
5. A per unit mass cost which, whilst usually higher than for hot-rolled open sections, has reduced relative to hot-rolled sections.
6. SSHS combines resistance to wind, water or wave loading with an architecturally stimulating and aesthetic shape, characteristics which combine to naturally lend themselves to exposure in landmark structures with open light designs. The smaller surface area than comparable structures with open sections and the absence of sharp corners and reduced ledges result in better corrosion protection in these applications.

Critical to the design of structures comprising SSHS framing is the efficient and sympathetic design and detailing of connections, often with no or minimal cleats or stiffening plates. Since the connection strength is influenced by the geometric properties of the members, the designer must understand the nuances of hollow section connection design and the consequent ever present conflict between member size and shape and the desirable elimination of ancillary stiffening/strengthening plates and the like. A strong appreciation of these issues is needed at conceptual design stage in order to ensure optimal design.

