

3. Classification of Cranes and Runways

3.1. Reason for crane classification

The main purpose of classification of the crane structures and crane runways is to provide a basis for strength and fatigue assessment of the runway system. The main parameters used in the classification are the number of load application cycles and the load spectrum. The load spectrum denotes the shape of the statistical cumulative frequency curve. When a crane lifts loads close to the rated load most of the time it is termed 'heavy duty' crane and consequently a higher classification designation applies. Most cranes are not required to lift heavy loads every time, thus their spectrum factor is lower and this in turn produces a lower classification designation. The second consideration in the classification is the number of lifts in the design life of the crane (25 years normally). In AS 1418.1 there are 10 utilisation classes, the lightest being Class U0, and the heaviest, Class U9.

Without the classification system it would be necessary to conduct a load spectrum analysis for each production facility, that is to study the work pattern, the number of lifts of each load range and the magnitude of loads in each cycle so that a statistical analysis can be carried out. Such a study can be very time consuming and costly. High cost may be warranted where large number of cranes is in operation in the same, well-defined process, for example the steelworks, alumina smelting and ship loading/unloading.

3.2. Utilisation Class – Global design

Crane bridge structures are classified on the basis of the total number of operating cycles based on the 25-year design life of the crane. It should be understood that an operating cycle starts with hoisting the load from the initial position, travelling with the load and depositing it to its final position. The design life of the crane runway may be somewhere between the minimum of 25 years, as specified in the AS 1418.18, and 30 year life used in building design and this would be subject of a design brief from the building owner.

The number of operating cycles to be adopted for design of the crane runway could be in proportion to the respective life of the runway and the crane for a crane where hoisting of the loads occurs in the same position in the least favourable location for the girder. But because not all crane operating cycles occur over the most unfavourable locations it becomes appropriate to reduce the runway load spectrum factor, K_p by one increment. The best way to accomplish this is to carry out a crane/runway utilization study to obtain a realistic number of operating cycles and load spectrum factors.

The counter argument can be advanced that the crane passage cycles over certain runway spans, eg at loading bays, may be more frequent than on the average. AS 1418.18 require that the same number of



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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Runway & Crane System	2
2.1. Crane types	3
2.2. Crane runway girders	5
2.3. Monorail beams	7
2.4. Building columns and frames	8
3. Classification of Cranes and Runways	9
3.1. Reason for crane classification	9
3.2. Utilisation Class – Global design	9
3.3. Local Utilization class	10
3.4. Multiple Cranes	10
3.5. Structural Class v/s Group Class	11
3.6. Duty Classification	11
4. Crane Loads	12
4.1. Load determination	12
4.2. Load combinations	12
4.3. Dynamic factors	14
4.4. Long travel acceleration forces	14
4.5. Wind on crane and hoisted load	15
4.6. Buffer impact	16
4.7. Oblique travelling	16
4.8. Approximate load determination	17
5. Structural Analysis	19
5.1. Global load effects	19
5.2. Analysis for global loads	19
5.3. Curved monorail beams	22
5.4. Girder cross section	22
6. Design Procedure	24
6.1. Design for strength	24
6.2. Torsion	25
6.3. Torsion Capacity by rigorous method	25
6.4. Lateral stability of the runway girder	26
6.5. Box Sections	26
6.6. Design for fatigue resistance	27
6.7. Local load effects in the top flange region	27
6.8. Web stiffeners	33
6.9. Lateral restraints at columns	34
6.10. End stops	35
6.11. Monorail beams	36

7. Design for Fatigue Resistance	40
7.1. General	40
7.2. Stress analysis	40
7.3. Number of stress cycles	41
7.4. Fatigue Verification by AS 4100	42
8. Deflection Limits	43
9. Detail Design	45
9.1. Detailing practices	45
9.2. Bolted connections	45
9.3. Welded joints	45
9.4. Splices in simply supported runways	46
9.5. Avoidance of lamellar tearing	46
9.6. Web stiffeners	47
9.7. End bearing stiffeners and bearing details	48
9.8. Crane columns and corbels	50
9.9. Longitudinal Bracing	51
10. Rails and Accessories	52
10.1. Rail splices and expansion joints	52
10.2. Rail fixings	53
10.3. Resilient bedding strips	54
10.4. Painting	54
11. Materials, Fabrication, Workmanship and Tolerances	55
11.1. Materials	55
11.2. Workmanship	55
11.3. Welding top hat sections	56
11.4. Tolerances	56
12. Inspection and Maintenance	57
13. Numerical Example	58
14. Glossary	67
15. References	69

List of Figures

Fig 1.	Types of overhead running cranes	3
Fig 2.	Types of crane drives	4
Fig 3.	Runway Static System	6
Fig 4.	Monorail beam and cranes	7
Fig 5.	Relation between building frame and the runway	8
Fig 6.	Inertial forces	15
Fig 7.	Buffers and Buffer impact	16
Fig 8.	Oblique travel forces	17
Fig 9.	Crane wheel loads	18
Fig 10.	Frame / runway relation	19
Fig 11.	Bending moment envelope and influence lines	20
Fig 12.	Global analysis for vertical and torsional loads	21
Fig 13.	Curved monorail beam	22
Fig 14.	Types of cross section	23
Fig 15.	'Top Hat' (a) and lipped sections (b)	23
Fig 16.	Localized effects in the top flange area	27
Fig 17.	Web crushing (AS4100 method)	29
Fig 18.	Buckling of the web panel due to patch load acting in the plane of the web (AS 4100 method)	30
Fig 19.	Transverse bending of web due to torque	31
Fig 20.	Transverse bending of top flange	32
Fig 21.	Elastomeric strips reduce transverse bending of flange	33
Fig 22.	Web stiffeners	34
Fig 23.	Lateral movement and rotation at girder bearing	35
Fig 24.	Forces on end stops	36
Fig 25.	Monorail bottom flange stresses	37
Fig 26.	Comparison of Becker(15) vs BHP plots for C_z under the wheel load	38
Fig 27.	Stress range vs number of stress cycles for normal stress and shear stresses (excerpt from AS4100)	42
Fig 28.	Deflection limits	44
Fig 29.	Rail meandering in practice	44
Fig 30.	Bolted intermediate web stiffeners	45
Fig 31.	Welded girder splices	46
Fig 32.	Web stiffener details	47
Fig 33.	End bearing stiffeners	48
Fig 34.	Bearings	49
Fig 35.	Unsatisfactory bearing details	49
Fig 36.	Types of supporting columns	50
Fig 37.	Longitudinal Expansion due to temperature and bracing of crane columns.	51
Fig 38.	More bearings and crane rail splice details	53
Fig 39.	Common rail fixings	54
Fig 40.	Soft bedding of rails	54
Fig 41.	Welding access to 'top hat' welds	56
Fig 42.	Applied Loads	58
Fig 43.	Section and Girder Dimensions	58
Fig 44.	Forces from trolley acceleration	59