APPENDIX A10—SEISMIC ANALYSIS AND DESIGN OF FOUNDATIONS

A10.1—INVESTIGATION

Slope instability, liquefaction, fill settlement, and increases in lateral earth pressure have often been major factors contributing to bridge damage in earthquakes. These earthquake hazards may be significant design factors for peak earthquake accelerations in excess of 0.1 *g* and should form part of a site-specific investigation if the site conditions and the associated acceleration levels and design concepts suggest that such hazards may be of importance.

A10.2—FOUNDATION DESIGN

The commonly-accepted practice for the seismic design of foundations is to utlize a pseudo-static approach, where earthquake-induced foundation loads are determined from the reaction forces and moments necessary for structural equilibrium. Although traditional bearing capacity design approaches are also applied, with appropriate capacity reduction factors if a margin of safety against “failure” is desired, a number of factors associated with the dynamic nature of earthquake loading should always be borne in mind.

Under cyclic loading at earthquake frequencies, the strength capable of being mobilized by many soils is greater than the static strength. For unsaturated cohesionless soils, the increase may be about ten percent, whereas for cohesive soils, a 50 percent increase could occur. However, for softer saturated clays and saturated sands, the potential for strength and stiffness degradation under repeated cycles of loading must also be recognized. For bridges classified as Zone 2, the use of static soil strengths for evaluating ultimate foundation capacity provides a small implicit measure of safety and, in most cases, strength and stiffness degradation under repeated loading will not be a problem because of the smaller magnitudes of seismic events. However, for bridges classified as Zones 3 and 4, some attention should be given to the potential for stiffness and strength degradation of site soils when evaluating ultimate foundation capacity for seismic design.

As earthquake loading is transient in nature, “failure” of soil for a short time during a cycle of loading may not be significant. Of perhaps greater concern is the magnitude of the cyclic foundation displacement or rotation associated with soil yield, as this could have a significant influence on structural displacements or bending moments and shear distributions in columns and other members.

As foundation compliance influences the distribution of forces or moments in a structure and affects computation of the natural period, equivalent stiffness factors for foundation systems are often required. In many cases, use is made of various analytical solutions that are available for footings or piles where it is assumed that soil behaves in an elastic medium. In using these formulae, it should be recognized that equivalent elastic moduli for soils are a function of strain amplitude, and for seismic loads modulus values could be significantly less than those appropriate for low levels of seismic loading. Variation of shear modulus with shearing strain amplitude in the case of sands is shown in Figure A10.2-1. Additional discussion of this topic can be found in the *AASHTO Guide Specifications for LRFD Seismic Bridge Design*.

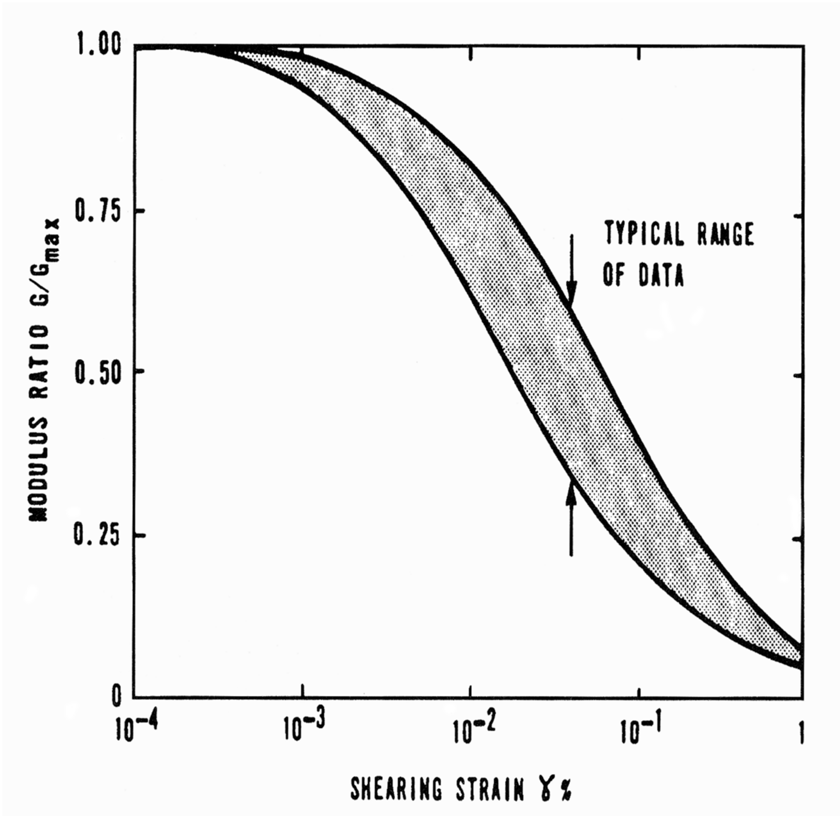

Figure A10.2-1—Variation of Shear Modulus with Shearing Strain for Sands

On the basis of field and experimental observations, it is becoming more widely recognized that transient foundation uplift or rocking during earthquake loading, resulting in separation of the foundation from the subsoil, is acceptable provided that appropriate design precautions are taken (Taylor and Williams, 1979). Experimental studies suggest that rotational yielding beneath rocking foundation can provide a useful form of energy dissipation. However, care must be taken to avoid significant induced vertical deformations accompanying possible soil yield during earthquake rocking as well as excessive pier movement. These could lead to design difficulties with relative displacements.

Lateral Loading of Piles—Most of the well-known solutions for computing the lateral stiffness of vertical piles are based on the assumption of elastic behavior and utilize equivalent cantilever beam concepts (Davisson and Gill, 1960), the beam on an elastic Inkler foundation method (Matlock and Reese, 1960), or elastic continuum solutions (Poulos, 1971). However, the use of methods incorporating nonlinear subgrade reaction behavior that allows for soil failure may be important for high lateral loading of piles in soft clay and sand. Such a procedure is encompassed in the American Petroleum Institute (API) recommendations for offshore platform design. The method utilizes nonlinear subgrade reaction or *p-y* curves for sands and clays that have been developed experimentally from field loading tests.

The general features of the API analysis in the case of sands are illustrated in Figure A10.2-2. Under large loads, a passive failure zone develops near the pile head. Test data indicate that the ultimate resistance, p_u, for lateral loading is reached for pile deflections, y_u, of about $3d/80$, where d is the pile diameter. Note that most of the lateral resistance is mobilized over a depth of about $5d$. The API method also recognizes degradation in lateral resistance with cylic loading, although in the case of saturated sands, the degradation postulated does not reflect pore water pressure increases. The degradation in lateral resistance due to earthquake-induced, free-field pore water pressure increases in saturated sands has been described by Finn and Martin (1979). A numerical method that allows the use of API *p-y* curves to compute pile stiffness characteristics forms the basis of the computer program BMCOL 76 described by Bogard and Matlock (1977).

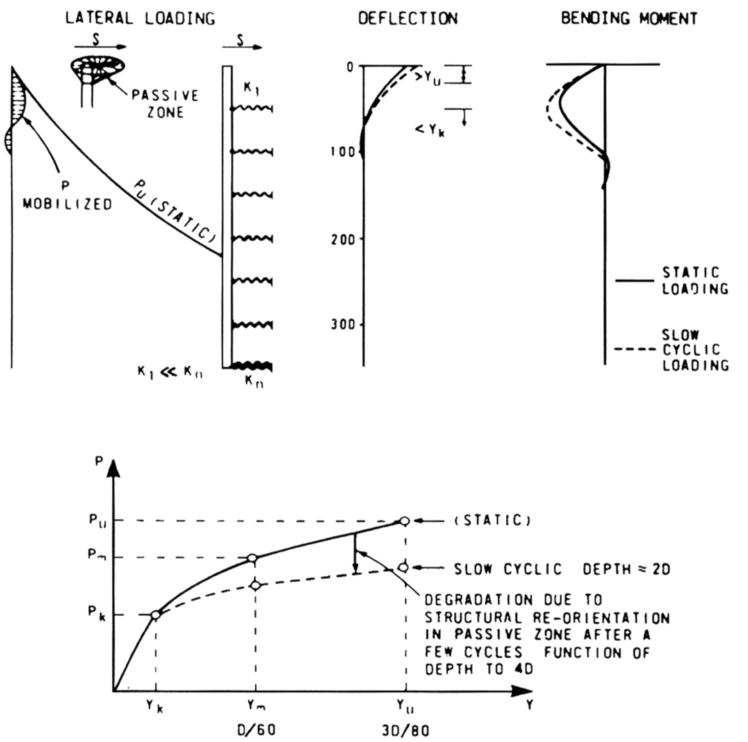

Figure A10.2-2—Lateral Loading of Piles in Sand Using API Criteria

The influence of group action on pile stiffness is a somewhat controversial subject. Solutions based on elastic theory can be misleading where yield near the pile head occurs. Experimental evidence tends to suggest that group action is not significant for pile spacings greater than 4*d* to 6*d*.

For batter pile systems, the computation of lateral pile stiffness is complicated by the stiffness of the piles in axial compression and tension. It is also important to recognize that bending deformations in batter pile groups may generate high reaction forces on the pile cap.

It should be noted that although battered piles are economically attractive for resisting horizontal loads, such piles are very rigid in the lateral direction if arranged so that only axial loads are induced. Hence, large relative lateral displacements of the more flexible surrounding soil may occur during the free-field earthquake response of the site (particularly if large changes in soil stiffness occur over the pile length), and these relative displacements may in turn induce high pile bending moments. For this reason, more flexible vertical pipe systems where lateral load is resisted by bending near the pile heads are recommended. However, such pile systems must be designed to be ductile because large lateral displacements may be necessary to resist the lateral load. A compromise design using battered piles spaced some distance apart may provide a system that has the benefits of limited flexibility and the economy of axial load resistance to lateral load.

Soil–Pile Interaction—The use of pile stiffness characteristics to determine earthquake-induced pile bending moments based on a pseudo-static approach assumes that moments are induced only by lateral loads arising from inertial effects on the bridge structure. However, it must be remembered that the inertial loads are generated by interaction of the free-field earthquake ground motion with the piles and that the free-field displacements themselves can influence bending moments. This is illustrated in an idealized manner in Figure A10.2-3. The free-field earthquake displacement time histories provide input into the lateral resistance interface elements, which in turn transfer motion to the pile. Near the pile heads, bending moments will be dominated by the lateral interaction loads generated by inertial effects on the bridge structure. At greater depth (e.g., greater than 10*d*), where soil stiffness progressively increases with respect to pile stiffness, the pile will be constrained to deform in a manner similar to that of the free field, and pile bending moments become a function of the curvatures induced by free-field displacements.

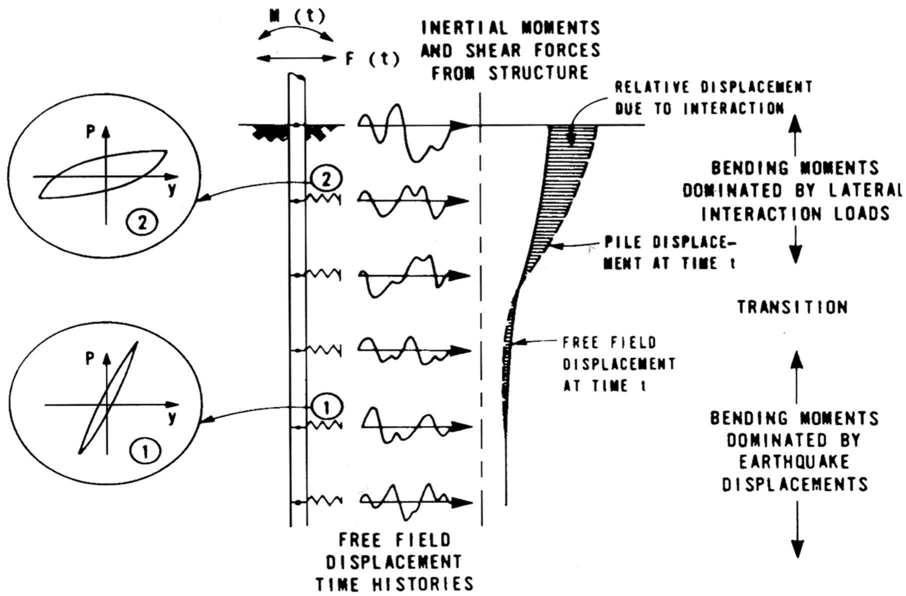

Figure A10.2-3—Mechanism of Soil–Pile Interaction during Seismic Loading

To illustrate the nature of free-field displacements, reference is made to Figure A10.2-4, which represents a 200-ft deep cohesionless soil profile subjected to the El Centro earthquake. The free-field response was determined using a nonlinear, one-dimensional response analysis. From the displacement profiles shown at specific times, curvatures can be computed and pile bending moments calculated if it is assumed that the pile is constrained to displace in phase with the free-field response.

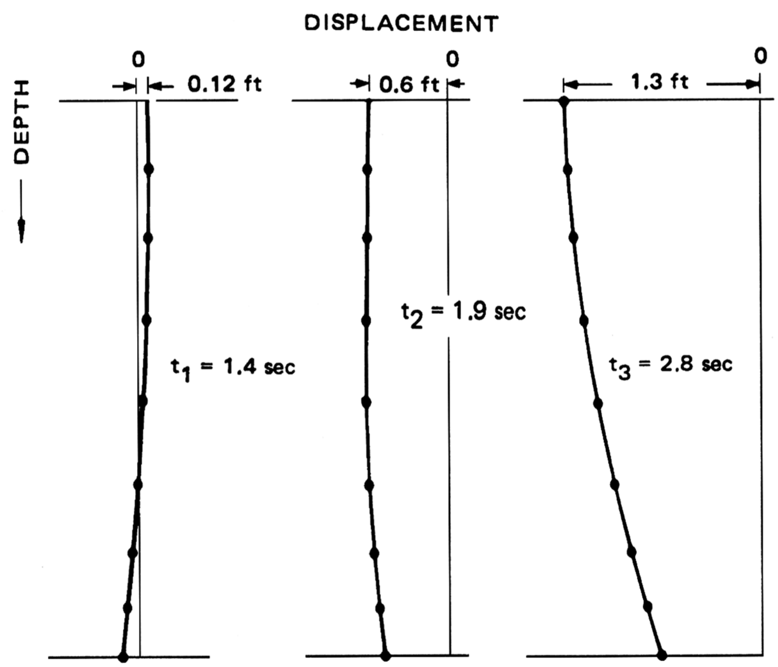

Figure A10.2-4—Typical Earthquake Displacement Profiles

Large curvatures could develop at interfaces between soft and rigid soils and, clearly, in such cases emphasis should be placed on using flexible ductile piles. Margason (1979) suggests that curvatures of up to 6×10^{-4} in.$^{-1}$ could be induced by strong earthquakes, but these should pose no problem to well-designed steel or prestressed concrete piles.

Studies incorporating the complete soil–pile structure interaction system, as presented in Figure A10.2-3, have been described by Penzien (1970) for a bridge piling system in deep soft clay. A similar but somewhat simpler soil–pile structure interaction system (SPASM) to that used by Penzien has been described by Matlock et al. (1978). The model used is, in effect, a dynamic version of the previously mentioned BMCOL program.

A10.3—SPECIAL PILE REQUIREMENTS

The uncertainties of ground and bridge response characteristics lead to the desirability of providing tolerant pile and foundation systems. Toughness under induced curvature and shears is required, and hence piles such as steel H-sections and concrete filled steel-cased piles are favored for highly seismic areas. Unreinforced concrete piles are brittle in nature, so nominal longitudinal reinforcing is specified to reduce this hazard. The reinforcing steel should be extended into the footing to tie elements together and to assist in load transfer from the pile to the pile cap.

Experience has shown that reinforced concrete piles tend to hinge or shatter immediately below the pile cap. Hence, tie spacing is reduced in this area so that the concrete is better confined. Driven precast piles should be constructed with considerable spiral confining steel to ensure good shear strength and tolerance of yield curvatures should these be imparted by the soil or structural response. Clearly, it is desirable to ensure that piles do not fail below ground level and that flexural yielding in the columns is forced to occur above ground level. The additional pile design requirements imposed on piles for bridges classified as Zones 3 and 4, for which earthquake loading is more severe, reflect a design philosophy aimed at minimizing below-ground damage that is not easily inspected following a major earthquake.