

**SEI/ASCE 7-10:**  
**Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures**

## Chapter 1 GENERAL

### 1.1 SCOPE

This standard provides minimum load requirements for the design of buildings and other structures that are subject to building code requirements. Loads and appropriate load combinations, which have been developed to be used together, are set forth for strength design and allowable stress design. For design strengths and allowable stress limits, design specifications for conventional structural materials used in buildings and modifications contained in this standard shall be followed.

### 1.2 DEFINITIONS AND NOTATIONS

#### 1.2.1 Definitions

The following definitions apply to the provisions of the entire standard.

**ALLOWABLE STRESS DESIGN:** A method of proportioning structural members such that elastically computed stresses produced in the members by nominal loads do not exceed specified allowable stresses (also called “working stress design”).

**AUTHORITY HAVING JURISDICTION:** The organization, political subdivision, office, or individual charged with the responsibility of administering and enforcing the provisions of this standard.

**BUILDINGS:** Structures, usually enclosed by walls and a roof, constructed to provide support or shelter for an intended occupancy.

**DESIGN STRENGTH:** The product of the nominal strength and a resistance factor.

**ESSENTIAL FACILITIES:** Buildings and other structures that are intended to remain operational in the event of extreme environmental loading from flood, wind, snow, or earthquakes.

**FACTORED LOAD:** The product of the nominal load and a load factor.

**HIGHLY TOXIC SUBSTANCE:** As defined in 29 CFR 1910.1200 Appendix A with Amendments as of February 1, 2000.

**IMPORTANCE FACTOR:** A factor that accounts for the degree of risk to human life, health, and welfare associated with damage to property or loss of use or functionality.

**LIMIT STATE:** A condition beyond which a structure or member becomes unfit for service and is

judged either to be no longer useful for its intended function (serviceability limit state) or to be unsafe (strength limit state).

**LOAD EFFECTS:** Forces and deformations produced in structural members by the applied loads.

**LOAD FACTOR:** A factor that accounts for deviations of the actual load from the nominal load, for uncertainties in the analysis that transforms the load into a load effect, and for the probability that more than one extreme load will occur simultaneously.

**LOADS:** Forces or other actions that result from the weight of all building materials, occupants and their possessions, environmental effects, differential movement, and restrained dimensional changes.

Permanent loads are those loads in which variations over time are rare or of small magnitude. All other loads are variable loads (see also “nominal loads”).

**NOMINAL LOADS:** The magnitudes of the loads specified in this standard for dead, live, soil, wind, snow, rain, flood, and earthquake.

**NOMINAL STRENGTH:** The capacity of a structure or member to resist the effects of loads, as determined by computations using specified material strengths and dimensions and formulas derived from accepted principles of structural mechanics or by field tests or laboratory tests of scaled models, allowing for modeling effects and differences between laboratory and field conditions.

**OCCUPANCY:** The purpose for which a building or other structure, or part thereof, is used or intended to be used.

**OTHER STRUCTURES:** Structures, other than buildings, for which loads are specified in this standard.

**P-DELTA EFFECT:** The second order effect on shears and moments of frame members induced by axial loads on a laterally displaced building frame.

**RESISTANCE FACTOR:** A factor that accounts for deviations of the actual strength from the nominal strength and the manner and consequences of failure (also called “strength reduction factor”).

**RISK CATEGORY:** A categorization of buildings and other structures for determination of flood, wind, snow, ice, and earthquake loads based on the risk associated with unacceptable performance. See Table 1.5-1.

**STRENGTH DESIGN:** A method of proportioning structural members such that the computed forces produced in the members by the factored loads do not

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**Table 1.5-1 Risk Category of Buildings and Other Structures for Flood, Wind, Snow, Earthquake, and Ice Loads**

Use or Occupancy of Buildings and Structures	Risk Category
Buildings and other structures that represent a low risk to human life in the event of failure	I
All buildings and other structures except those listed in Risk Categories I, III, and IV	II
Buildings and other structures, the failure of which could pose a substantial risk to human life.	III
Buildings and other structures, not included in Risk Category IV, with potential to cause a substantial economic impact and/or mass disruption of day-to-day civilian life in the event of failure.	
Buildings and other structures not included in Risk Category IV (including, but not limited to, facilities that manufacture, process, handle, store, use, or dispose of such substances as hazardous fuels, hazardous chemicals, hazardous waste, or explosives) containing toxic or explosive substances where their quantity exceeds a threshold quantity established by the authority having jurisdiction and is sufficient to pose a threat to the public if released.	
Buildings and other structures designated as essential facilities.	IV
Buildings and other structures, the failure of which could pose a substantial hazard to the community.	
Buildings and other structures (including, but not limited to, facilities that manufacture, process, handle, store, use, or dispose of such substances as hazardous fuels, hazardous chemicals, or hazardous waste) containing sufficient quantities of highly toxic substances where the quantity exceeds a threshold quantity established by the authority having jurisdiction to be dangerous to the public if released and is sufficient to pose a threat to the public if released. <sup>d</sup>	
Buildings and other structures required to maintain the functionality of other Risk Category IV structures.	

<sup>d</sup>Buildings and other structures containing toxic, highly toxic, or explosive substances shall be eligible for classification to a lower Risk Category if it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the authority having jurisdiction by a hazard assessment as described in Section 1.5.2 that a release of the substances is commensurate with the risk associated with that Risk Category.

exceed the member design strength (also called “load and resistance factor design”).

**TEMPORARY FACILITIES:** Buildings or other structures that are to be in service for a limited time and have a limited exposure period for environmental loadings.

**TOXIC SUBSTANCE:** As defined in 29 CFR 1910.1200 Appendix A with Amendments as of February 1, 2000.

**1.1.2 Symbols and Notations**

- $F_x$  A minimum design lateral force applied to level  $x$  of the structure and used for purposes of evaluating structural integrity in accordance with Section 1.4.2.
- $W_x$  The portion of the total dead load of the structure,  $D$ , located or assigned to Level  $x$ .
- $D$  Dead load.
- $L$  Live load.
- $L_r$  Roof live load.
- $N$  Notional load used to evaluate conformance with minimum structural integrity criteria.

- $R$  Rain load.
- $S$  Snow load.

**1.3 BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

**1.3.1 Strength and Stiffness**

Buildings and other structures, and all parts thereof, shall be designed and constructed with adequate strength and stiffness to provide structural stability, protect nonstructural components and systems from unacceptable damage, and meet the serviceability requirements of Section 1.3.2.

Acceptable strength shall be demonstrated using one or more of the following procedures:

- a. the Strength Procedures of Section 1.3.1.1,
- b. the Allowable Stress Procedures of Section 1.3.1.2, or
- c. subject to the approval of the authority having jurisdiction for individual projects, the Performance-Based Procedures of Section 1.3.1.3.

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It shall be permitted to use alternative procedures for different parts of a structure and for different load combinations, subject to the limitations of Chapter 2. Where resistance to extraordinary events is considered, the procedures of Section 2.5 shall be used.

**1.3.1.1 Strength Procedures**

Structural and nonstructural components and their connections shall have adequate strength to resist the applicable load combinations of Section 2.3 of this Standard without exceeding the applicable strength limit states for the materials of construction.

**1.3.1.2 Allowable Stress Procedures**

Structural and nonstructural components and their connections shall have adequate strength to resist the applicable load combinations of Section 2.4 of this Standard without exceeding the applicable allowable stresses for the materials of construction.

**1.3.1.3 Performance-Based Procedures**

Structural and nonstructural components and their connections shall be demonstrated by analysis or by a combination of analysis and testing to provide a reliability not less than that expected for similar components designed in accordance with the Strength Procedures of Section 1.3.1.1 when subject to the influence of dead, live, environmental, and other loads. Consideration shall be given to uncertainties in loading and resistance.

**1.3.1.3.1 Analysis** Analysis shall employ rational methods based on accepted principles of engineering mechanics and shall consider all significant sources of deformation and resistance. Assumptions of stiffness, strength, damping, and other properties of components and connections incorporated in the analysis shall be based on approved test data or referenced Standards.

**1.3.1.3.2 Testing** Testing used to substantiate the performance capability of structural and nonstructural components and their connections under load shall accurately represent the materials, configuration, construction, loading intensity, and boundary conditions anticipated in the structure. Where an approved industry standard or practice that governs the testing of similar components exists, the test program and determination of design values from the test program shall be in accordance with those industry standards and practices. Where such standards or practices do not exist, specimens shall be constructed to a scale similar to that of the intended application unless it can

be demonstrated that scale effects are not significant to the indicated performance. Evaluation of test results shall be made on the basis of the values obtained from not less than 3 tests, provided that the deviation of any value obtained from any single test does not vary from the average value for all tests by more than 15%. If such deviation from the average value for any test exceeds 15%, then additional tests shall be performed until the deviation of any test from the average value does not exceed 15% or a minimum of 6 tests have been performed. No test shall be eliminated unless a rationale for its exclusion is given. Test reports shall document the location, the time and date of the test, the characteristics of the tested specimen, the laboratory facilities, the test configuration, the applied loading and deformation under load, and the occurrence of any damage sustained by the specimen, together with the loading and deformation at which such damage occurred.

**1.3.1.3.3 Documentation** The procedures used to demonstrate compliance with this section and the results of analysis and testing shall be documented in one or more reports submitted to the authority having jurisdiction and to an independent peer review.

**1.3.1.3.4 Peer Review** The procedures and results of analysis, testing, and calculation used to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this section shall be subject to an independent peer review approved by the authority having jurisdiction. The peer review shall comprise one or more persons having the necessary expertise and knowledge to evaluate compliance, including knowledge of the expected performance, the structural and component behavior, the particular loads considered, structural analysis of the type performed, the materials of construction, and laboratory testing of elements and components to determine structural resistance and performance characteristics. The review shall include the assumptions, criteria, procedures, calculations, analytical models, test setup, test data, final drawings, and reports. Upon satisfactory completion, the peer review shall submit a letter to the authority having jurisdiction indicating the scope of their review and their findings.

**1.3.2 Serviceability**

Structural systems, and members thereof, shall be designed to have adequate stiffness to limit deflections, lateral drift, vibration, or any other deformations that adversely affect the intended use and performance of buildings and other structures.

## Chapter 2

# COMBINATIONS OF LOADS

### 2.1 GENERAL

Buildings and other structures shall be designed using the provisions of either Section 2.3 or 2.4. Where elements of a structure are designed by a particular material standard or specification, they shall be designed exclusively by either Section 2.3 or 2.4.

### 2.2 SYMBOLS

$A_k$  = load or load effect arising from extra ordinary event  $A$   
 $D$  = dead load  
 $D_i$  = weight of ice  
 $E$  = earthquake load  
 $F$  = load due to fluids with well-defined pressures and maximum heights  
 $F_a$  = flood load  
 $H$  = load due to lateral earth pressure, ground water pressure, or pressure of bulk materials  
 $L$  = live load  
 $L_r$  = roof live load  
 $R$  = rain load  
 $S$  = snow load  
 $T$  = self-straining load  
 $W$  = wind load  
 $W_i$  = wind-on-ice determined in accordance with Chapter 10

### 2.3 COMBINING FACTORED LOADS USING STRENGTH DESIGN

#### 2.3.1 Applicability

The load combinations and load factors given in Section 2.3.2 shall be used only in those cases in which they are specifically authorized by the applicable material design standard.

#### 2.3.2 Basic Combinations

Structures, components, and foundations shall be designed so that their design strength equals or exceeds the effects of the factored loads in the following combinations:

1.  $1.4D$
2.  $1.2D + 1.6L + 0.5(L_r \text{ or } S \text{ or } R)$
3.  $1.2D + 1.6(L_r \text{ or } S \text{ or } R) + (L \text{ or } 0.5W)$
4.  $1.2D + 1.0W + L + 0.5(L_r \text{ or } S \text{ or } R)$

5.  $1.2D + 1.0E + L + 0.2S$
6.  $0.9D + 1.0W$
7.  $0.9D + 1.0E$

#### EXCEPTIONS:

1. The load factor on  $L$  in combinations 3, 4, and 5 is permitted to equal 0.5 for all occupancies in which  $L_o$  in Table 4-1 is less than or equal to 100 psf, with the exception of garages or areas occupied as places of public assembly.
2. In combinations 2, 4, and 5, the companion load  $S$  shall be taken as either the flat roof snow load ( $p_f$ ) or the sloped roof snow load ( $p_s$ ).

Where fluid loads  $F$  are present, they shall be included with the same load factor as dead load  $D$  in combinations 1 through 5 and 7.

Where load  $H$  are present, they shall be included as follows:

1. where the effect of  $H$  adds to the primary variable load effect, include  $H$  with a load factor of 1.6;
2. where the effect of  $H$  resists the primary variable load effect, include  $H$  with a load factor of 0.9 where the load is permanent or a load factor of 0 for all other conditions.

Effects of one or more loads not acting shall be investigated. The most unfavorable effects from both wind and earthquake loads shall be investigated, where appropriate, but they need not be considered to act simultaneously. Refer to Section 12.4 for specific definition of the earthquake load effect  $E$ .<sup>1</sup>

Each relevant strength limit state shall be investigated.

#### 2.3.3 Load Combinations Including Flood Load

When a structure is located in a flood zone (Section 5.3.1), the following load combinations shall be considered in addition to the basic combinations in Section 2.3.2:

1. In V-Zones or Coastal A-Zones,  $1.0W$  in combinations 4 and 6 shall be replaced by  $1.0W + 2.0F_a$ .
2. In noncoastal A-Zones,  $1.0W$  in combinations 4 and 6 shall be replaced by  $0.5W + 1.0F_a$ .

<sup>1</sup>The same  $E$  from Sections 1.4 and 12.4 is used for both Sections 2.3.2 and 2.4.1. Refer to the Chapter 11 Commentary for the Seismic Provisions.

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**2.3.4. Load Combinations Including Atmospheric Ice Loads**

When a structure is subjected to atmospheric ice and wind-on-ice loads, the following load combinations shall be considered:

1.  $0.5(L_r \text{ or } S \text{ or } R)$  in combination 2 shall be replaced by  $0.2D_i + 0.5S$ .
2.  $1.0W + 0.5(L_r \text{ or } S \text{ or } R)$  in combination 4 shall be replaced by  $D_i + W_i + 0.5S$ .
3.  $1.0W$  in combination 6 shall be replaced by  $D_i + W_i$ .

**2.3.5 Load Combinations Including Self-Straining Loads**

Where applicable, the structural effects of load  $T$  shall be considered in combination with other loads. The load factor on load  $T$  shall be established considering the uncertainty associated with the likely magnitude of the load, the probability that the maximum effect of  $T$  will occur simultaneously with other applied loadings, and the potential adverse consequences if the effect of  $T$  is greater than assumed. The load factor on  $T$  shall not have a value less than 1.0.

**2.3.6 Load Combinations for Nonspecified Loads**

Where approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction, the Responsible Design Professional is permitted to determine the combined load effect for strength design using a method that is consistent with the method on which the load combination requirements in Section 2.3.2 are based. Such a method must be probability-based and must be accompanied by documentation regarding the analysis and collection of supporting data that is acceptable to the Authority Having Jurisdiction.

**2.4 COMBINING NOMINAL LOADS USING ALLOWABLE STRESS DESIGN****2.4.1 Basic Combinations**

Loads listed herein shall be considered to act in the following combinations; whichever produces the most unfavorable effect in the building, foundation, or structural member being considered. Effects of one or more loads not acting shall be considered.

1.  $D$
2.  $D + L$
3.  $D + (L_r \text{ or } S \text{ or } R)$

4.  $D + 0.75L + 0.75(L_r \text{ or } S \text{ or } R)$
5.  $D + (0.6W \text{ or } 0.7E)$
- 6a.  $D + 0.75L + 0.75(0.6W) + 0.75(L_r \text{ or } S \text{ or } R)$
- 6b.  $D + 0.75L + 0.75(0.7E) + 0.75S$
7.  $0.6D + 0.6W$
8.  $0.6D + 0.7E$

**EXCEPTIONS:**

1. In combinations 4 and 6, the companion load  $S$  shall be taken as either the flat roof snow load ( $p_f$ ) or the sloped roof snow load ( $p_s$ ).
2. For nonbuilding structures, in which the wind load is determined from force coefficients,  $C_f$ , identified in Figures 29.5-1, 29.5-2 and 29.5-3 and the projected area contributing wind force to a foundation element exceeds 1,000 square feet on either a vertical or a horizontal plane, it shall be permitted to replace  $W$  with  $0.9W$  in combination 7 for design of the foundation, excluding anchorage of the structure to the foundation.
3. It shall be permitted to replace  $0.6D$  with  $0.9D$  in combination 8 for the design of Special Reinforced Masonry Shear Walls, where the walls satisfy the requirement of Section 14.4.2.

Where fluid loads  $F$  are present, they shall be included in combinations 1 through 6 and 8 with the same factor as that used for dead load  $D$ .

Where load  $H$  is present, it shall be included as follows:

1. where the effect of  $H$  adds to the primary variable load effect, include  $H$  with a load factor of 1.0;
2. where the effect of  $H$  resists the primary variable load effect, include  $H$  with a load factor of 0.6 where the load is permanent or a load factor of 0 for all other conditions.

The most unfavorable effects from both wind and earthquake loads shall be considered, where appropriate, but they need not be assumed to act simultaneously. Refer to Section 1.4 and 12.4 for the specific definition of the earthquake load effect  $E$ .<sup>2</sup>

Increases in allowable stress shall not be used with the loads or load combinations given in this standard unless it can be demonstrated that such an increase is justified by structural behavior caused by rate or duration of load.

<sup>2</sup>The same  $E$  from Sections 1.4 and 12.4 is used for both Sections 2.3.2 and 2.4.1. Refer to the Chapter 11 Commentary for the Seismic Provisions.

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**2.4.2 Load Combinations Including Flood Load**

When a structure is located in a flood zone, the following load combinations shall be considered in addition to the basic combinations in Section 2.4.1:

1. In V-Zones or Coastal A-Zones (Section 5.3.1),  $1.5F_a$  shall be added to other loads in combinations 5, 6, and 7, and  $E$  shall be set equal to zero in 5 and 6.
2. In non-coastal A-Zones,  $0.75F_a$  shall be added to combinations 5, 6, and 7, and  $E$  shall be set equal to zero in 5 and 6.

**2.4.3 Load Combinations Including Atmospheric Ice Loads**

When a structure is subjected to atmospheric ice and wind-on-ice loads, the following load combinations shall be considered:

1.  $0.7D_i$  shall be added to combination 2.
2. ( $L_r$  or  $S$  or  $R$ ) in combination 3 shall be replaced by  $0.7D_i + 0.7W_i + S$ .
3.  $0.6W$  in combination 7 shall be replaced by  $0.7D_i + 0.7W_i$ .

**2.4.4 Load Combinations Including Self-Straining Loads**

Where applicable, the structural effects of load  $T$  shall be considered in combination with other loads. Where the maximum effect of load  $T$  is unlikely to occur simultaneously with the maximum effects of other variable loads, it shall be permitted to reduce the magnitude of  $T$  considered in combination with these other loads. The fraction of  $T$  considered in combination with other loads shall not be less than 0.75.

**2.5 LOAD COMBINATIONS FOR EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS****2.5.1 Applicability**

Where required by the owner or applicable code, strength and stability shall be checked to ensure that structures are capable of withstanding the effects of extraordinary (i.e., low-probability) events, such as fires, explosions, and vehicular impact without disproportionate collapse.

**2.5.2 Load Combinations****2.5.2.1 Capacity**

For checking the capacity of a structure or structural element to withstand the effect of an extraordinary event, the following gravity load combination shall be considered:

$$(0.9 \text{ or } 1.2)D + A_k + 0.5L + 0.2S \quad (2.5-1)$$

in which  $A_k$  = the load or load effect resulting from extraordinary event  $A$ .

**2.5.2.2 Residual Capacity**

For checking the residual load-carrying capacity of a structure or structural element following the occurrence of a damaging event, selected load-bearing elements identified by the Responsible Design Professional shall be notionally removed, and the capacity of the damaged structure shall be evaluated using the following gravity load combination:

$$(0.9 \text{ or } 1.2)D + 0.5L + 0.2(L_r \text{ or } S \text{ or } R) \quad (2.5-2)$$

**2.5.3 Stability Requirements**

Stability shall be provided for the structure as a whole and for each of its elements. Any method that considers the influence of second-order effects is permitted.