



Designation: D4428/D4428M – 07

Standard Test Methods for Crosshole Seismic Testing¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D4428/D4428M; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope*

1.1 These test methods are limited to the determination of horizontally traveling compression (P) and shear (S) seismic waves at test sites consisting primarily of soil materials (as opposed to rock). A preferred test method intended for use on critical projects where the highest quality data must be obtained is included. Also included is an optional method intended for use on projects which do not require measurements of a high degree of precision.

1.2 Various applications of the data will be addressed and acceptable interpretation procedures and equipment, such as seismic sources, receivers, and recording systems will be discussed. Other items addressed include borehole spacing, drilling, casing, grouting, deviation surveys, and actual test conduct. Data reduction and interpretation is limited to the identification of various seismic wave types, apparent velocity relation to true velocity, example computations, effective borehole spacing, use of Snell's law of refraction, assumptions, and computer programs.

1.3 It is important to note that more than one acceptable device can be used to generate a high-quality P wave or S wave, or both. Further, several types of commercially available receivers and recording systems can also be used to conduct an acceptable crosshole survey. Consequently, these test methods primarily concern the actual test procedure, data interpretation, and specifications for equipment which will yield uniform test results.

1.4 All recorded and calculated values shall conform to the guide for significant digits and rounding established in Practice D6026.

1.4.1 The procedures used to specify how data are collected/recorded and calculated in these test methods are regarded as the industry standard. In addition, they are representative of the significant digits that should generally be retained. The procedures used do not consider material variation, purpose for obtaining the data, special purpose studies, or any consider-

ations for the user's objectives; and it is common practice to increase or reduce significant digits of reported data to be commensurate with these considerations. It is beyond the scope of these test methods to consider significant digits used in analysis methods for engineering design.

1.4.2 Measurements made to more significant digits or better sensitivity than specified in these test methods shall not be regarded a nonconformance with this standard.

1.5 These test methods are written using SI units. Inch-pound units are provided for convenience. The values stated in inch pound units may not be exact equivalents; therefore, they shall be used independently of the SI system. Combining values from the two systems may result in nonconformance with these test methods.

1.5.1 The gravitational system of inch-pound units is used when dealing with inch-pound units. In this system, the pound (lbf) represents a unit of force (weight), while the unit for mass is slugs. The rationalized slug unit is not given, unless dynamic ($F = ma$) calculations are involved.

1.5.2 It is common practice in the engineering/construction profession to concurrently use pounds to represent both a unit of mass (lbm) and of force (lbf). This implicitly combines two separate systems of units; that is, the absolute system and the gravitational system. It is scientifically undesirable to combine the use of two separate sets of inch-pound units within a single standard. As stated, these test methods include the gravitational system of inch-pound units and do not use or present the slug unit for mass. However, the use of balances or scales recording pounds of mass (lbm) or recording density in lbm/ft³ shall not be regarded as nonconformance with this standard.

1.6 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

D653 Terminology Relating to Soil, Rock, and Contained Fluids

D3740 Practice for Minimum Requirements for Agencies Engaged in Testing and/or Inspection of Soil and Rock as Used in Engineering Design and Construction

¹ These test methods are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D18 on Soil and Rock and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D18.09 on Cyclic and Dynamic Properties of Soils.

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*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard

D6026 Practice for Using Significant Digits in Geotechnical Data

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of other terms used in these Test Methods, see Terminology D653.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The Crosshole Seismic Test makes direct measurements of compression velocities, shear wave velocities, or both, in boreholes advanced through soil or rock. At selected depths down the borehole, a borehole seismic source is used to generate a seismic wave train. Downhole receivers are used to detect the arrival of the seismic wave train in offset borings. Cased borings that are spaced 10 to 20 ft apart are typically used. The distance between boreholes at the test depths is measured using a borehole deviation survey. The borehole seismic source is connected to and triggers a data recording system that records the response of the downhole receiver(s), thus measuring the travel time of the wave train between the source and receiver(s). The compression or shear wave velocity is calculated from the measured distance and travel time for the respective wave train.

NOTE 1—The quality of the results produced by these test methods is dependent on the competence of the personnel performing it and the suitability of the equipment and facilities. Agencies that meet the criteria of Practice D3740 are generally considered capable of competent and objective testing/sampling/inspection and so forth. Users of these test methods are cautioned that compliance with Practice D3740 does not in itself assure reliable results. Reliable results depend on many factors; Practice D3740 provides a means of evaluating some of those factors.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The seismic crosshole method provides a designer with information pertinent to the seismic wave velocities of the materials in question (1).² This data may be used as input into static/dynamic analyses, as a means for computing shear modulus, Young's modulus, and Poisson's ratio, or simply for the determination of anomalies that might exist between boreholes.

5.2 Fundamental assumptions inherent in the test methods are as follows:

5.2.1 Horizontal layering is assumed.

5.2.2 Snell's laws of refraction will apply. If Snell's laws of refraction are not applied, velocities obtained will be unreliable.

6. Apparatus

6.1 The basic data acquisition system consists of the following:

6.1.1 *Energy Sources*—These energy sources are chosen according to the needs of the survey, the primary consideration being whether P-wave or S-wave velocities are to be determined. The source should be rich in the type of energy required, that is, to produce good P-wave data, the energy source must transmit adequate energy to the medium in

compression or volume change. Impulsive sources, such as explosives, hammers, or air guns, are all acceptable P-wave generators. To produce an identifiable S wave, the source should transmit energy to the ground primarily by directionalized distortion. For good S waves, energy sources must be repeatable and, although not mandatory, reversible. The S-wave source must be capable of producing an S-wave train with an amplitude at least twice that of the P-wave train. Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 show examples of impulse and vibratory seismic sources.

6.1.2 *Receivers*—The receivers intended for use in the crosshole test shall be transducers having appropriate frequency and sensitivity characteristics to determine the seismic wave train arrival. Typical examples include geophones and accelerometers. The frequency response of the transducer must not vary more than 5 % over a range of frequencies from 1/2 to 2 times the predominant frequency of the site-specific S-wave train. Each receiving unit will consist of at least three transducers combined orthogonally to form a triaxial array, that is, one vertical and two horizontal transducers mounted at right angles, one to the other. In this triaxis arrangement, only the vertical component will be acceptable for S-wave arrival determinations. In cases where P-wave arrivals are not desired, a uniaxial vertical transducer may be used. P-wave arrivals will be determined using the horizontal transducer oriented most nearly radially to the source. The transducer(s) shall be housed in a single container (cylindrical shape preferred) not exceeding 450 mm [18 in.] in length. Provision must be made for the container to be held in firm contact with the sidewall of the borehole. Examples of acceptable methods include: air bladder, wedge, stiff spring, or mechanical expander.

6.1.3 *Recording System*—The system shall consist of separate amplifiers, one for each transducer being recorded, having identical phase characteristics and adjustable gain control. Only digital signal filtering will be acceptable. Analog filtering, active or passive, will not be acceptable because of inherent phase delays. The receiver signals shall be displayed in a manner such that precision timing of the P and S-wave arrival referenced to the instant of seismic source activation can be

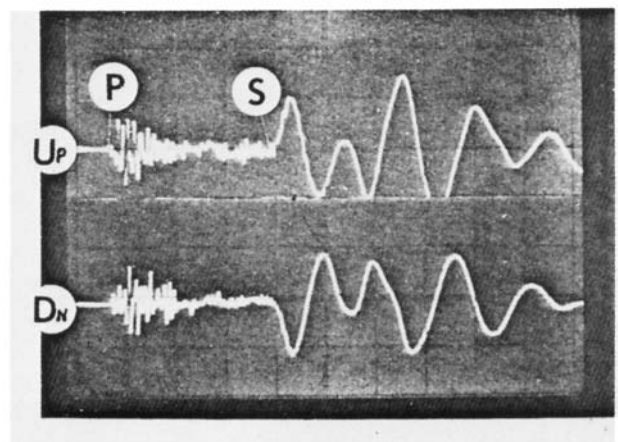


FIG. 1 Reversible Impulse Seismic Source (Produces Both P and S Wave Trains)

² The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of this standard.

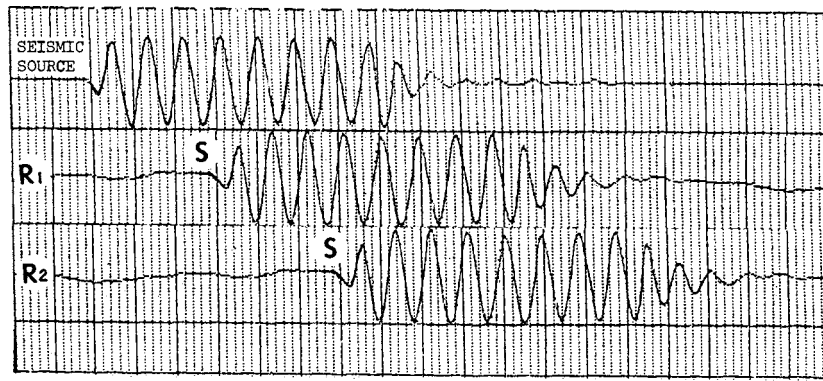


FIG. 2 Borehole Vibratory Seismic Source (Produces S Wave Train Only)

determined within 0.1 ms when materials other than rock are being tested. Timing accuracy shall be demonstrated both immediately prior to and immediately after the conduct of the crosshole test. Demonstrate accuracy by inducing and recording on the receiver channels an oscillating signal of 1000 Hz derived from a quartz-controlled oscillator, or, a certified laboratory calibration obtained within the time frame recommended by the instrument manufacturer. Further, the timing signal shall be recorded at every sweep rate or recorder speed, or both, used during conduct of the crosshole test. As an optional method, the true zero time shall be determined by (1) a simultaneous display of the triggering mechanism along with at least one receiver, or (2) a laboratory calibration (accurate to 0.1 ms) of the triggering mechanism which will determine the lapsed time between the trigger closure and development of that voltage required to initiate the sweep on an oscilloscope or seismograph. Permanent records of the seismic events shall be made by either scope-mounted camera or oscillograph.

7. Procedure

7.1 Borehole Preparation:

7.1.1 *Preferred*—The preferred method for preparing a borehole set for crosshole testing incorporates three boreholes in line, spaced 3.0 m [10 ft] apart, center-to-center on the ground surface, as illustrated in Fig. 3. If, however, it is known that S wave velocities will exceed 450 m/s [1500 ft/s], such as is often encountered in alluvial materials, borehole spacings may be extended to 4.5 m [15 ft].

7.1.1.1 Drill the boreholes, with minimum sidewall disturbance, to a diameter not exceeding 175 mm [7.0 in.]. After the drilling is completed, case the borings with 50 to 100 mm [2 to 4 in.] inside diameter PVC pipe or aluminum casing, taking into consideration the size of the borehole source and down-hole receivers. Before inserting the casing, close the bottom of the pipe with a cap which has a one way ball-check valve capable of accommodating 38 mm [1½ in.] outside diameter grout pipe. Center the casing with spacers and insert it into the bottom of the borehole. Grout the casing in place by (1) inserting a 38 mm [1½ in.] PVC pipe through the center of the casing, contacting the one-way valve fixed to the end cap (Fig. 4 (side A)), or (2) by a small diameter grout tube inserted to the bottom of the borehole between the casing and the borehole sidewall (Fig. 4 (side B)). Another acceptable method would be to fill the borehole with grout which would be displaced by

end-capped fluid-filled casing. The grout mixture should be formulated to approximate closely the density of the surrounding in situ material after solidification. That portion of the boring that penetrates rock should be grouted with a conventional portland cement which will harden to a density of about 2.20 Mg/m³ [140 lb/ft³]. That portion of the boring in contact with soils, sands, or gravels should be grouted with a mixture simulating the average density of the medium (about 1.80 to 1.90 Mg/m³ [110 to 120 lb/ft³]) by premixing 450 g [1 lb] of bentonite and 450 g [1 lb] of portland cement to 2.80 kg [6.25 lb] of water. Anchor the casing and pump the grout using a conventional, circulating pump capable of moving the grout through the grout pipe to the bottom of the casing upward from the bottom of the borehole (Fig. 4). Using this procedure, the annular space between the sidewall of the borehole and the casing will be filled from bottom to top in a uniform fashion displacing mud and debris with minimum sidewall disturbance. Keep the casing anchored and allow the grout to set before using the boreholes for crosshole testing. If shrinkage occurs near the mouth of the borehole, additional grout should be inserted until the annular space is filled flush with the ground surface (4).

7.1.2 *Optional*—If the scope or intended use of a particular project does not warrant the time and expense which would be incurred by the preferred method, or if the specific project such as an investigation beneath a relatively small machine foundation is undertaken, this optional method may be used.

7.1.2.1 In all cases, a minimum of two boreholes must be used. If the borings are to be 15 m [50 ft] deep or less, verticality will be controlled using a level on the drill stem extending into the borehole. Center-to-center surface borehole spacing will be determined by the nature of the project. Borings may be used either with or without casing; however, if casing is used, grout must be injected between the casing and sidewall of the borehole to ensure good contact in the manner described in 7.1.1.1. If the center-to-center surface borehole spacing exceeds 6.0 m [20 ft], the probability of measurement of refracted waves rather than a direct wave in each layer greatly increases. As a consequence, data obtained by the optional method must be used with caution.

7.2 *Borehole Deviation Survey*—A borehole deviation survey must be conducted to determine accurately the horizontal distance between borings.

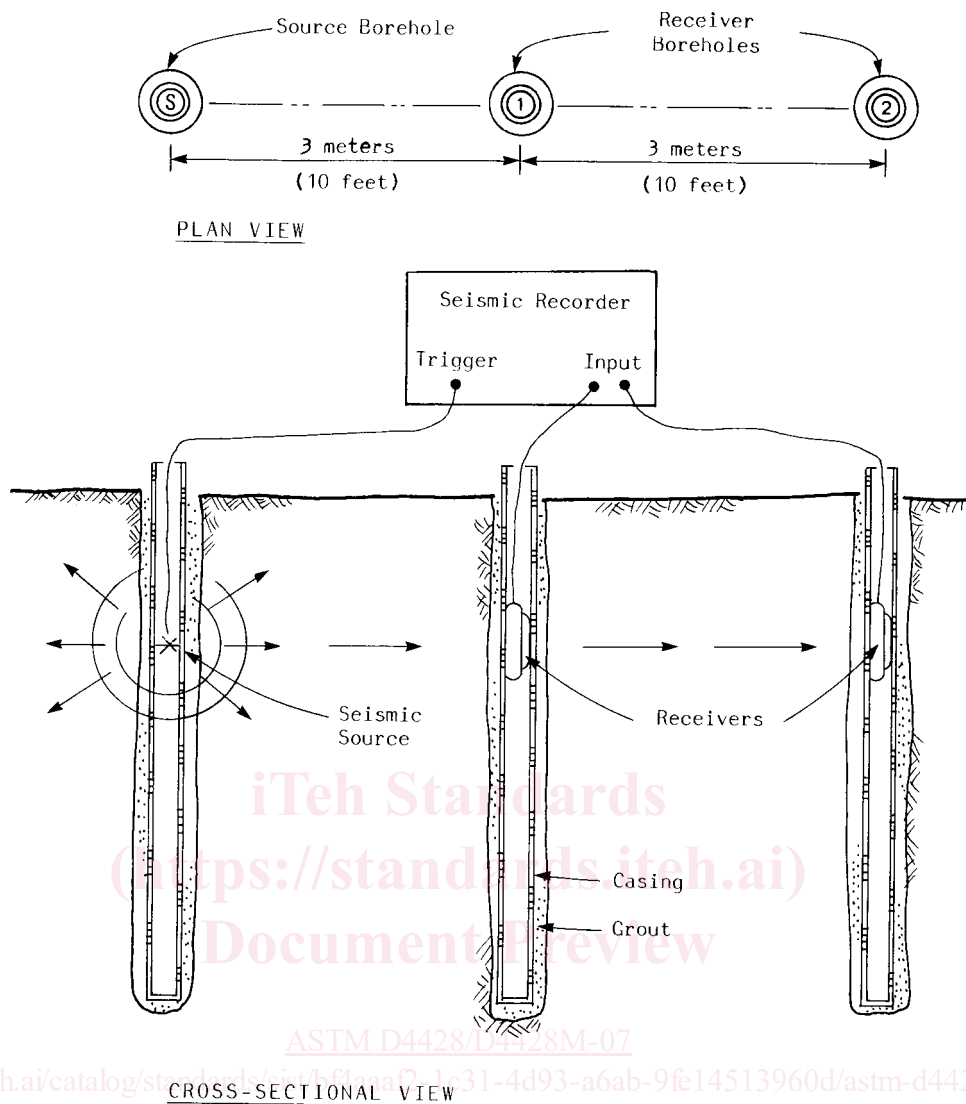


FIG. 3 Crosshole Seismic Test

7.2.1 *Preferred Method*—Conduct a borehole deviation survey in all three crosshole borings with an instrument capable of measuring the precise vertical alignment of each hole. The instrument must have the capability of determining horizontal orientation with a 2° sensitivity and an inclination range from 0 to 30° with a sensitivity of 0.1°. Information thus obtained will enable the investigator to compute true vertical depth and horizontal position at any point within the borehole so that actual distance between the holes can be computed to within ±2% to a depth of about 30.0 m [100 ft].

7.2.1.1 Proceed with the survey beginning at the mouth of the borehole obtaining deviation data at intervals not exceeding 3.0 m [10 ft] to the bottom of the boring. Repeat the measurements on the withdrawal trip at intervals not exceeding 6.0 m [20 ft] so that closure can be determined at the mouth of the borehole.

7.2.2 *Optional Method*—If the scope of a project dictates the use of the optional procedure described in 7.1.2, the following precautions must be undertaken to ensure verticality of the borings.

7.2.2.1 Level the borehole drilling apparatus using a level placed on the drill stem extending into the mouth of the borehole.

7.2.2.2 As drilling progresses, recheck the drill stem at 3.0 m [10 ft] depth intervals and realign as necessary.

7.2.2.3 Limit the maximum depth of investigation to less than 15 m [50 ft]. If the depth of investigation exceeds 15 m [50 ft] a deviation survey such as described in 7.2.1 must be conducted.

7.2.2.4 If casing is used, grout as described in 7.1.1, then evacuate all fluid from the interior and insert a lighted plumb-bob observing its attitude at 3-m [10-ft] intervals. If the plumb-bob strikes the sidewall, note that depth and the direction of deviation.

7.2.2.5 Estimate the distance between borings and provide appropriate caution statements on all data.

7.3 *Crosshole Test:*

7.3.1 *Preferred Method*—Begin the crosshole test by placing the energy source in an end hole at a depth no greater than

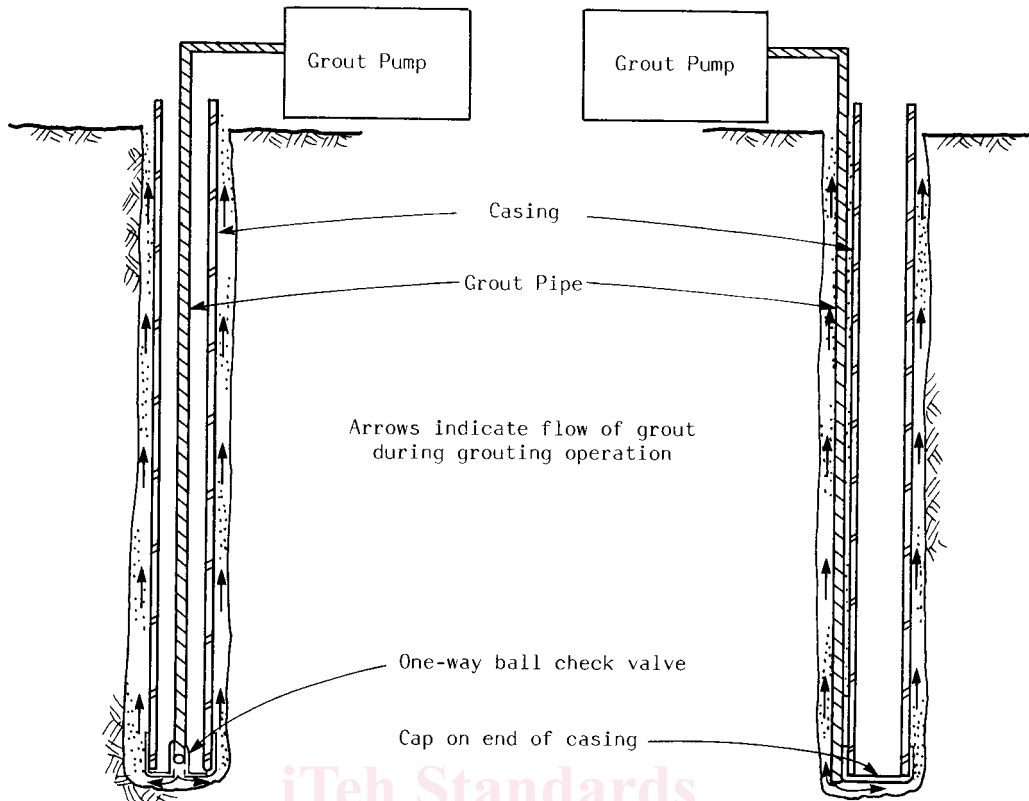


FIG. 4 Acceptable Grouting Techniques

1.5 m [5 ft] (Fig. 3) into the stratum being investigated. Place the two receivers at the same elevation in each of the designated receiver holes. Clamp the source and receivers firmly into place. Check recording equipment and verify timing. Activate the energy source and display both receivers simultaneously on the recording device. Adjust the signal amplitude and duration such that the P-wave train or S-wave train, or both, are displayed in their entirety.

7.3.1.1 Best results will be obtained by performing two separate tests: one optimized for P-wave recovery (fastest sweep/recorder rate, higher gain settings) and the second for S-wave recovery (slower sweep/recorder rate, lower gain settings). If enhancement equipment is being used, repeatedly activate the energy source until optimum results are displayed. Do not overrange memory circuitry. A clipped signal is unacceptable. Perform the second test by lowering the energy source and receivers to a depth dictated by known stratification, but no greater than 1.5 m [5.0 ft] from the previous test locations in the borings and repeat the above procedure. Perform succeeding tests at intervals determined by stratification, or at intervals of 1.5 m [5 ft] until the maximum borehole depth has been reached. During withdrawal of the energy source and receivers from the boreholes, perform repeat tests at 6.0-m [20-ft] intervals until the ground surface is reached.

7.3.2 *Optional Method*—Use a minimum of two boreholes. If, however, only two boreholes are used, the importance of true zero time determination as described in 6.1.3 cannot be overemphasized. Place the energy source in one borehole at a depth dictated by test objectives and the receiver at the same elevation in the second borehole. Activate the seismic source

and display the trigger mechanism and the receiver simultaneously on the recording device. Adjust the sweep rate so that the P-wave train or S-wave train, or both, are displayed in their entirety. If enhancement/stacking equipment is being used, the seismic source should be activated repeatedly until optimum results are displayed. After wave trains have been identified and duly recorded in their entirety, sweep rates may be expanded for optimum determination of arrival times. Additional permanent records should then be made. Overranging of memory circuitry resulting in a clipped signal is not acceptable. Repeat the test at a second location as predetermined by known stratification information and repeat the above procedure. Perform succeeding tests at intervals of about 1.5 m [5 ft], or intervals determined by stratification.

8. Data Reduction and Interpretation

8.1 *Deviation Survey*—The primary objective of the borehole deviation survey is to establish the correct horizontal distance between the three in-line borings. Seismic wave velocities compensating for borehole deviation will be computed by determining the straight-line distance, l , from source to receivers. To do this, the following data are needed:

E_S = elevation of the top of the source hole,

E_G = elevation of the top of the geophone hole,

D_S = depth of the seismic source,

D_G = depth of the geophone,

L = horizontal distance between the top of the source hole and geophone hole,

ϕ = azimuth with respect to north from the top of the source hole to the geophone hole,

x_s = the north deviation of the source borehole at the source depth,

y_s = the east deviation of the source borehole at the source depth,

x_G = the north deviation of the geophone borehole at the geophone depth, and

y_G = the east deviation of the geophone borehole at the geophone depth.

8.1.1 The following equation determines the straight-line distance, l , from source to geophone using the data of 8.1:

$$l = \sqrt{[(E_s - D_s) - (E_G - D_G)]^2 + (L \cos \phi + x_G - x_s)^2 + (L \sin \phi + y_G - y_s)^2}$$

The apparent velocity is equal to l divided by the travel time. Use the same method to determine the straight-line distances between the geophone holes.

8.2 Wave Train Identification:

8.2.1 Identify the P-wave train arrival time as the first departure of the static horizontal receiver trace after time $T = 0$. It should be noted that the horizontally oriented geophones will often (correctly) respond earlier than the vertically oriented because of the longitudinal particle motion associated with the P wave (5). If both wave trains (P and S) are displayed simultaneously on the records, the S wave will be identified on the seismic signature by the following characteristics:

8.2.1.1 A sudden increase in amplitude of at least two times that of the P-wave train, and,

8.2.1.2 An abrupt change in frequency coinciding with the amplitude change which results in a period increase of at least two times that of the characteristic period of the P wave.

8.2.1.3 *Optional*—If a reversible polarity seismic source is used, the S wave arrival will be determined as that point meeting the criteria of 8.2.1.1 and 8.2.1.2 and where a 180° polarity change is noted to have occurred.

8.2.2 The above characteristics are displayed in Fig. 1. Determine the arrival time for the P wave or S wave directly from the record as the lapsed time between time zero (activation of the seismic source) and the arrival of the respective wave trains at each of the receivers. If a vertically polarized S wave vibratory source is used, the arrival time of the S wave will be determined from the time lapsed between the start up of

the seismic source monitor geophone and the first arrival of a seismic signal bearing the same characteristic frequency. No discernible P-wave signal is present; consequently, the vibratory source is unacceptable for P wave determinations (see Fig. 2).

8.3 Data Tabulation:

8.3.1 Three separate travel times observed in the field and recorded are as follows:

8.3.1.1 Source to Receiver 1,

8.3.1.2 Source to Receiver 2, and

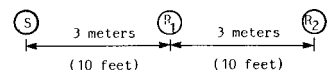
8.3.1.3 Time difference between Receivers 1 and 2.

8.3.2 Tabulate the data in a manner similar to that shown in Fig. 5. Determine preliminary velocity in the field (recognizing that borehole deviations have not been taken into account) by dividing the measured surface distance between source and receivers by the arrival time at each respective receiver. Determine incremental velocity by dividing the measured distance between receivers R_1 and R_2 by the difference in arrival times between source and R_2 and source and R_1 .

NOTE 2—Under ideal circumstances, (that is, nonlayered homogeneous materials, vertical boreholes, and no trigger delays in the recording equipment) all three computed velocities ($S - R_1$, $S - R_2$, and $R_1 - R_2$) should be the same value. In normal testing, however, this will rarely be true. Trigger delays up to 3 ms have been observed in some equipment, causing erroneously high computed velocities between $S - R_1$ and $S - R_2$. If this occurs, $S - R_1$ will compute the highest velocity, followed by $S - R_2$. The incremental $R_1 - R_2$ velocity will not be affected by trigger errors. Other factors which can affect incremental velocity determinations are: (a) dissimilar materials between borings 1-2 and 2-3, (b) faulting or drastically inclined layering, and (c) refraction caused by the presence of a nearby higher velocity layer. Items (a) and (b) can only be determined by other direct tests. If such conditions exist, the usefulness of the crosshole test should be judged according to the purpose of the site investigation. Item (c) can be accounted for by proper use of Snell's law of refraction. Therefore, the standard crosshole velocity will be determined from the incremental time recorded between receiver holes R_1 and R_2 (5).

8.4 Data Reduction:

8.4.1 In materials where abrupt changes in density or elasticity occur, the ray travel path of the wave might not be a straight line (6). In such cases, Snell's law of refraction must be used. Examples are shown in Fig. 6 and the Appendixes.



Depth m (ft)	Travel Time (msec)						Apparent Velocity mps (fps)						
	S - R ₁		S - R ₂		R ₁ - R ₂		S - R ₁		S - R ₂		R ₁ - R ₂		
	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	

FIG. 5 Crosshole Data Tabulation