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**Mechanical vibration — Measurement  
of vibration generated internally in  
railway tunnels by the passage of trains**

*Vibrations mécaniques — Mesurage des vibrations produites à  
l'intérieur des tunnels ferroviaires par le passage des trains*

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 108, *Mechanical vibration, shock and condition monitoring*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Measurement and evaluation of mechanical vibration and shock as applied to machines, vehicles and structures*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 10815:1996), of which it constitutes a minor revision with the following changes:

- normative references have been updated;
- subclause numbering has been updated;
- bibliography has been updated.

## Introduction

Railway tunnels are regularly exposed to vibration originating from internal sources (trains and service carriages, maintenance work, etc.).

In this document, only vibration resulting from the passage of trains is considered.

Vibration is measured in tunnels for different purposes, which are summarized as follows.

When a tunnel is reported to be exposed to vibration which might cause concern regarding its integrity, suitable measurements (see [9.2](#)) should be taken to assess whether the levels are acceptable.

Measurements of vibration might be carried out in the following cases:

- when the maximum allowable vibration level has been established and a regular check is required (see [9.3](#));
- when the dynamic performance of a newly built tunnel has been predicted and performance has to be checked against design data (see [9.2](#));
- a special situation may arise when the tunnel has been exposed to abnormal external action (e.g. due to fires, earthquakes, blasting, pile drivers or demolition of nearby buildings) and the integrity of the structure has to be checked (see [9.2](#));
- when any modification to the track and/or internal vibration sources (e.g. load on vehicle axles) has been made.

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# Mechanical vibration — Measurement of vibration generated internally in railway tunnels by the passage of trains

## 1 Scope

This document establishes the basic principles for measuring, processing and evaluating vibration generated internally in railway tunnels by the passage of trains.

By establishing a standard procedure, comparative data may be obtained on response of the tunnel elements from time to time, provided that the excitation source is the same. Data obtained in different tunnels may also be compared.

The measurements considered in this document concern the response of the structure and secondary elements mounted in the tunnel. They do not concern the response of persons in the tunnel or in its vicinity, or of passengers on trains running through the tunnel.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 1683, *Acoustics — Preferred reference values for acoustical and vibratory levels*

ISO 5348, *Mechanical vibration and shock — Mechanical mounting of accelerometers*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>

### 3.1

#### tunnel

underground structure in which passenger trains, freight trains or service trains travel

### 3.2

#### background noise

sum of all the signals except the one under investigation

## 4 Factors affecting vibration

### 4.1 Tunnel-related factors

#### 4.1.1 General

The dynamic characteristics of a tunnel depend largely on its geometry, secondary elements, depth of the tunnel and soil properties.

A lined tunnel is usually a system of discrete elements (concrete, ventilation channels, etc.) each coupled with the soil. They may have different response characteristics and coupling with the surrounding soil and/or rock.

#### 4.1.2 Tunnel types and conditions

There are many kinds of tunnels, all of which respond to vibration in a different way. Examples are given in [Annex B](#).

#### 4.1.3 Natural frequencies and damping ratios

For this document, the frequencies of interest are likely to relate to the response of the tunnel elements and not to a fundamental frequency of the tunnel cavity in the surrounding medium. The natural frequencies of these elements can be determined as follows:

- measurement of the response of the tunnel elements when they are affected by a large, transient external influence such as, for instance, pile driving or blasting;
- the use of a shaker as a mono-frequency source together with measurement of the response amplitude;
- measurement of the response using ambient excitation and spectrum analysis.

Accurate determination of damping is a difficult task, especially for tunnels containing both lightly damped elements, such as beams, and elements which are in firm contact with the tunnel surfaces and therefore are highly damped due to wave radiation.

#### 4.1.4 Soil

The soil surrounding the tunnel has an important effect on the stiffness of the tunnel and on the tunnel response to vibration, and as such is therefore of main concern when making predictions about response. Its characteristics depend on soil particle size, compaction, saturation, underground water level and bedding, and upon amplitude, frequency and duration of the excitation.

#### 4.2 Source-related factors

The vibration produced by the passage of trains may be classified according to the signal type, the duration and the frequency range (see ISO 4866).

The signal depends on the mechanical properties of the train, the track, the wheel-rail contact and on the loading and speed of the train.

The frequency range to be analysed depends on the spectral distribution of the excitation forces and the transfer function from the source to the tunnel walls or linings.

The frequency range from 1 Hz to 100 Hz covers the responses of different elements of the tunnel. On the rail, the frequency range of interest is usually up to 2 kHz, although higher frequencies are often present.

### 5 Quantities to be measured

In the frequency range of interest for tunnel vibration, usually a kinematic value such as velocity or acceleration is measured.

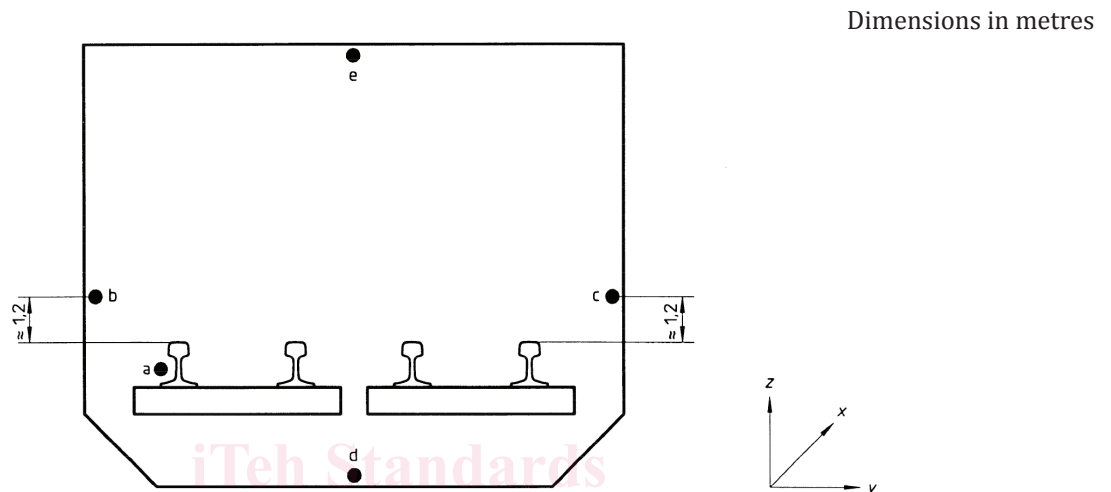
In the lower frequency range, velocity measurement is preferred although in the higher frequency range, instrumental factors dictate that acceleration be measured.



## 6 Measurement methods

### 6.1 Positioning the transducers with respect to passage of trains

Ideally, a straight stretch of the tunnel, at least 200 m long, should be available for the readings. The transducers should be placed away from any visible singular features (major cracks, water seepages, switch points and crossings), unless the effect of such a feature is to be investigated. To investigate the tunnel response, the transducers should preferably be oriented in line with the three principal axes of the tunnel (one vertical, two horizontal; see [Figure 1](#)).



Type of test	Measurement points
Full (see <a href="#">9.2</a> )	a, b, c, d, e
Limited (see <a href="#">9.3</a> )	b, d, e

**Figure 1 — Measurement points at a cross-section, depending on the type of test**

In the following assignment of measurement points, it is assumed that the train is running over the left track (see [Figure 1](#)).

For full and limited tests (see [9.2](#) and [9.3](#)), the transducers should be arranged as follows:

- on the invert at the cross-section vertical centre line (point d of [Figure 1](#)), between two sleepers in the case of tracks laid on ballast, or between two successive fasteners or rail spikes for other types of track;
- on the vault (point e of [Figure 1](#)), directly above point d;
- on the tunnel wall close to the track where the train will run, 1,20 m above the level of the rails (point b of [Figure 1](#)).

In order to investigate the relationship between trains as excitation sources and vibration transmitted to the tunnel, measurements should be made on the foot of the rail perpendicular to the plane of the rails (point a of [Figure 1](#)).

Position a is prone to local effects and its typicality and stability should be established before its selection as a control point for a limited test.

Allowance should be made for the slope shaping the foot of the rail (see [Figure 2](#)).

If the invert is not accessible, the transducer should be placed at the nearest suitable point and any element between the transducer and the invert should be indicated.

For full tests (see 9.2), readings shall also be taken at other two sections away from the middle section (typically 20 m) in order to minimize local influences. However, when the signal issuing from two corresponding points on two sections placed 20 m away from each other are equal, measurements may be taken at one section only.

If, however, such readings differ systematically by more than 25 % (2 dB), they should be discarded and a third section considered.

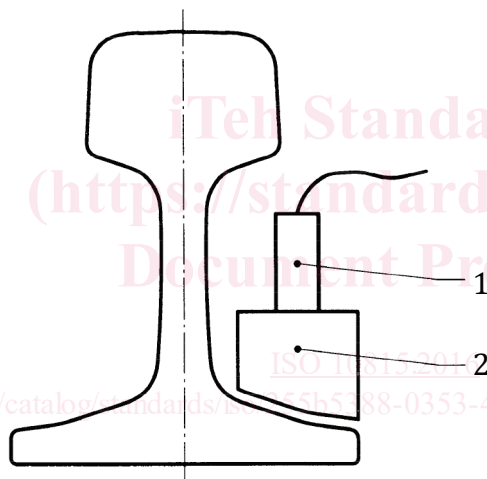
When the readings taken at all three sections are in disagreement, the local conditions should be examined and another measurement section selected.

## 6.2 Fastening the transducers

For mounting the transducers, the principles laid down in ISO 5348 shall be followed, so as to reproduce the motion of the vibrating elements, minimizing the response due to the mounting system.

The mounting, therefore shall be rigid and as light as possible.

When fixing transducers to the foot of a rail, a shaped steel plate should be rigidly fixed between the transducer and the rail (e.g. welded to the rail); otherwise, the transducers cannot be mounted perpendicular to the foot of the rail (see Figure 2).



### Key

- 1 transducer
- 2 shaped steel plate

**Figure 2 — Measurement point at the foot of a rail**

It is very important that the system of transducers, mounting support and bolt has a mounting resonance frequency much higher than the upper frequency of the range of interest (see ISO 5348).

It may be noted that accelerometers can be very sensitive to air-coupled response during the passage of a train. It is, therefore, necessary to protect them from airborne sound.

## 6.3 Signal-to-noise ratio

It is advisable to measure the background noise (see 3.2), whenever possible, deactivating the sources of vibration to be measured. For instance, when the vibration caused by a passing train is recorded, the signal present in the absence of the train should be recorded and processed in the same way. The results of both are then compared; their ratio is the signal-to-noise ratio S/N.