

3.6.1.2.6—Distribution of Wheel Loads through Earth Fills

Where the depth of fill is less than 2.0 ft, live loads shall be distributed to the top slabs of culverts as specified in Article 4.6.2.10.

In lieu of a more precise analysis, or the use of other acceptable approximate methods of load distribution permitted in Section 12, where the depth of fill is 2.0 ft or greater, wheel loads may be considered to be uniformly distributed over a rectangular area with sides equal to the dimension of the tire contact area, as specified in Article 3.6.1.2.5, and increased by either 1.15 times the depth of the fill in select granular backfill, or the depth of the fill in all other cases. The provisions of Articles 3.6.1.1.2 and 3.6.1.3 shall apply.

Where such areas from several wheels overlap, the total load shall be uniformly distributed over the area.

For single-span culverts, the effects of live load may be neglected where the depth of fill is more than 8.0 ft and exceeds the span length; for multiple span culverts, the effects may be neglected where the depth of fill exceeds the distance between faces of end walls.

Where the live load and impact moment in concrete slabs, based on the distribution of the wheel load through earth fills, exceeds the live load and impact moment calculated according to Article 4.6.2.10, the latter moment shall be used.

3.6.1.3—Application of Design Vehicular Live Loads

3.6.1.3.1—General

Unless otherwise specified, the extreme force effect shall be taken as the larger of the following:

- The effect of the design tandem combined with the effect of the design lane load, or
- The effect of one design truck with the variable axle spacing specified in Article 3.6.1.2.2, combined with the effect of the design lane load, and

C3.6.1.2.6

Elastic solutions for pressures produced within an infinite half-space by loads on the ground surface can be found in Poulos and Davis (1974), NAVFAC DM-7.1 (1982), and soil mechanics textbooks.

This approximation is similar to the 60-degree rule found in many texts on soil mechanics. The dimensions of the tire contact area are determined at the surface based on the dynamic load allowance of 33 percent at depth = 0. They are projected through the soil as specified. The pressure intensity on the surface is based on the wheel load without dynamic load allowance. A dynamic load allowance is added to the pressure on the projected area. The dynamic load allowance also varies with depth as specified in Article 3.6.2.2. The design lane load is applied where appropriate and multiple presence factors apply.

This provision applies to relieving slabs below grade and to top slabs of box culverts.

Traditionally, the effect of fills less than 2.0 ft deep on live load has been ignored. Research (McGrath, et al. 2004) has shown that in design of box sections allowing distribution of live load through fill in the direction parallel to the span provides a more accurate design model to predict moment, thrust, and shear forces. Provisions in Article 4.6.2.10 provide a means to address the effect of shallow fills.

C3.6.1.3.1

The effects of an axle sequence and the lane load are superposed in order to obtain extreme values. This is a deviation from the traditional AASHTO approach, in which either the truck or the lane load, with an additional concentrated load, provided for extreme effects.

The lane load is not interrupted to provide space for the axle sequences of the design tandem or the design truck; interruption is needed only for patch loading patterns to produce extreme force effects.