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# 46

## Concrete Bridge Construction

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## 46.1 Introduction

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This chapter will focus on the principles and practices related to construction of concrete bridges in which construction engineering contributes greatly to the successful completion of the projects. We will first present the fundamentals of construction engineering and analyze the challenges and obstacles involved in such processes and then introduce the problems in relation to design, construction practices, project planning, scheduling and control, which are the ground of future factorial improvements in effective construction engineering in the United States. Finally, we will discuss prestressed concrete, high-performance concrete, and falsework in some detail.

## 46.2 Effective Construction Engineering

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The construction industry is a very competitive business and many companies who engage in this marketplace develop proprietary technology in their field. In reality, most practical day-to-day issues are very common to the whole industry. Construction engineering is a combination of art and

science and has a tendency to become more the art of applying science (engineering principles) and approaches to the construction operations. Construction engineering includes design, construction operation, and project management. The final product of the design team effort is to produce drawings, specifications, and special provisions for various types of bridges. A fundamental part of construction engineering is construction project management (project design, planning, scheduling, controlling, etc.).

Planning starts with analysis of the type and scope of the work to be accomplished and selection of techniques, equipment, and labor force. Scheduling includes the sequence of operations and the interrelation of operations both at a job site and with external aspects, as well as allocation of manpower and equipment. Controlling consists of supervision, engineering inspection, detailed procedural instructions, record maintenance, and cost control. Good construction engineering analysis will produce more valuable, effective, and applicable instructions, charts, schedules, etc.

The objective is to plan, schedule, and control the construction process such that every construction worker and every activity contributes to accomplishing tasks with minimum waste of time and money and without interference. All construction engineering documents (charts, instructions, and drawings) must be clear, concise, definitive, and understandable by those who actually perform the work. As mentioned before, the bridge is the final product of design team efforts. When all phases of construction engineering are completed, this product — the bridge — is ready for to take service loading. In all aspects of construction engineering, especially in prestressed concrete, design must be integrated for the most effective results. The historical artificial separation of the disciplines — design and construction engineering — was set forth to take advantage of the concentration of different skills in the workplace. In today's world, the design team and construction team must be members of one team, partners with one common goal. That is the reason partnering represents a new and powerful team-building process, designed to ensure that projects become positive, ethical, and win-win experiences for all parties involved.

The highly technical nature of a prestressing operation makes it essential to perform preconstruction planning in considerable detail. Most problems associated with prestressed concrete could have been prevented by properly planning before the actual construction begins. Preconstruction planning at the beginning of projects will ensure that the structure is constructed in accordance with the plans, specifications, special provisions, and will also help detect problems that might arise during construction. It includes (1) discussions and conferences with the contractor, (2) review of the responsibilities of other parties, and (3) familiarization with the plans, specifications, and special provisions that relate to the planned work, especially if there are any unusual conditions. The preconstruction conference might include such items as scheduling, value of engineering, grade control, safety and environmental issues, access and operational considerations, falsework requirements, sequence of concrete placement, and concrete quality control and strength requirements. Pre-construction planning has been very profitable and in many has cases resulted in substantial reduction of labor costs. More often in prestressed concrete construction, the details of tendon layout, selection of prestressing system, mild-steel details, etc. are left up to general contractors or their specialized subcontractors, with the designer showing only the final prestress and its profile and setting forth criteria. And contractors must understand the design consideration fully to select the most efficient and economical system. Such knowledge may in many cases provide a competitive edge, and construction engineering can play a very important role in it.

## **46.3 Construction Project Management**

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### **46.3.1 General Principles**

Construction project management is a fundamental part of construction engineering. It is a feat that few, if any, individuals can accomplish alone. It may involve a highly specialized technical

field or science, but it always includes human interactions, attitudes and aspects of leadership, common sense, and resourcefulness. Although no one element in construction project management will create success, failure in one of the foregoing elements will certainly be enough to promote failure and to escalate costs. Today's construction environment requires serious consultation and management of the following life-cycle elements: design (including specifications, contract clauses, and drawings), estimating, budgeting, scheduling, procurement, biddability–constructibility–operability (BCO) review, permits and licenses, site survey, assessment and layout, preconstruction and mutual understanding conference, safety, regulatory requirements, quality control (QC), construction acceptance, coordination of technical and special support, construction changes and modifications, maintenance of progress drawings (redlines), creating as-built drawings, project records, among other elements.

Many construction corporations are becoming more involved in environmental restoration either under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) or under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA, otherwise commonly known as the Superfund). This new involvement requires additional methodology and considerations by managers. Some elements that would otherwise be briefly covered or completely ignored under normal considerations may be addressed and required in a site Specific Health and Environmental Response Plan (SHERP). Some elements of the SHERP may include site health and safety staff, site hazard analysis, chemical and analytical protocol, personal protective equipment requirements and activities, instrumentation for hazard detection, medical surveillance of personnel, evacuation plans, special layout of zones (exclusion, reduction and support), and emergency procedures.

Federal government contracting places additional demands on construction project management in terms of added requirements in the area of submittals and transmittals, contracted labor and labor standards, small disadvantaged subcontracting plans, and many other contractual certification issues, among others. Many of these government demands are recurring elements throughout the life cycle of the project which may require adequate resource allocation (manpower) not necessary under the previous scenarios.

The intricacies of construction project management require the leadership and management skills of a unique individual who is not necessarily a specialist in any one of the aforementioned elements but who has the capacity to converse and interface with specialists in the various fields (i.e., chemists, geologists, surveyors, mechanics, etc.). An individual with a combination of an engineering undergraduate degree and a graduate business management degree is most likely to succeed in this environment. Field management experience can substitute for an advanced management degree.

It is the purpose of this section to discuss and elaborate elements of construction project management and to relate some field experiences and considerations. The information presented here will only promote further discussion and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

### **46.3.2 Contract Administration**

Contract administration focuses on the relationships between the involved parties during the contract performance or project duration. Due to the nature of business, contract administration embraces numerous postaward and preaward functions. The basic goals of contract administration are to assure that the owner is satisfied and all involved parties are compensated on time for their efforts. The degree and intensity of contract administration will vary from contract to contract depending upon the size and complexity of the effort to be performed. Since money is of the essence, too many resources can add costs and expenditures to the project, while insufficient resources may also cost in loss of time, in inefficiencies, and in delays. A successful construction project management program is one that has the vision and flexibility to allocate contract administrative personnel and resources wisely and that maintains a delicate balance in resources necessary to sustain required efficiencies throughout the project life cycle.

### 46.3.3 Project Design

Project design is the cornerstone of construction project management. In this phase, concepts are drawn, formulated, and created to satisfy a need or request. The design is normally supported by sound engineering calculations, estimates, and assumptions. Extensive reviews are performed to minimize unforeseen circumstances, avoiding construction changes or modifications to the maximum extent possible in addition to verifying facts, refining or clarifying concepts, and dismissing assumptions. This phase may be the ideal time for identification and selection of the management team.

Normally, 33, 65, 95, and 100% design reviews are standard practice. The final design review follows the 95% design review which is intended for the purpose of assuring that review comments have been either incorporated into the design or dismissed from consideration. Reviews include design analysis reviews and BCO reviews. It can be clearly understood from the nomenclature that a BCO encompasses all facets of a project. Biddability relates to how the contract requirements are worded to assure clarity of purpose or intent and understanding by potential construction contractors. Constructibility concentrates on how components of the work or features of the work are assembled and how they relate to the intended final product. The main purpose of the constructibility review is to answer questions, such as whether it can be built in the manner represented in the contract drawings and specifications. Interaction between mechanical, civil, electrical, and other related fields is also considered here. Operability includes aspects of maintenance and operation, warranties, services, manpower, and resource allocation during the life of the finished work.

The finished product of the design phase should include construction drawings illustrating dimensions, locations, and details of components; contract clauses and special clauses outlining specific needs of the construction contractor; specifications for mechanical, civil, and electrical or special equipment; a bidding and payment schedule with details on how parties will be compensated for work performed or equipment produced and delivered; responsibilities; and operation and maintenance (O&M) requirements. In many instances, the designer is involved throughout the construction phase for design clarification or interpretation, incorporation of construction changes or modifications to the project, and possible O&M reviews and actions. It is not uncommon to have the designer perform contract management services for the owner.

There are a number of computer software packages readily available to assist members of the management team in writing, recording, transmitting, tracking, safekeeping, and incorporating BCO comments. Accuracy of records and safekeeping of documentation regarding this process has proved to be valuable when a dispute, claim, design deficiency, or liability issue are encountered later during the project life cycle.

### 46.3.4 Planning and Scheduling

Planning and schedulings are ongoing tasks throughout the project until completion and occupancy by a certain date occur. Once the design is completed and the contractor selected to perform the work, the next logical step may be to schedule and conduct a preconstruction conference. Personnel representing the owner, designer, construction contractor, regulatory agencies, and any management/oversight agency should attend this conference. Among several key topics to discuss and understand, construction planning and scheduling is most likely to be the main subject of discussion. It is during this conference that the construction contractor may present how the work will be executed. The document here is considered the “baseline schedule.” Thereafter, the baseline schedule becomes a living document by which progress is recorded and measured. Consequently, the baseline schedule can be updated and reviewed in a timely manner and becomes the construction progress schedule. As stated previously, the construction progress schedule is the means by which the construction contractor records progress of work, anticipates or forecasts requirements so proper procurement and allocation of resources can be achieved, and reports the construction status of work upwardly to the owner or other interested parties. In addition, the construction contractor may use progress schedule information to assist in increasing efficiencies or to formulate the basis

of payment for services provided or rendered and to anticipate cash flow requirements. The construction progress schedule can be updated as needed, or mutually agreed to by the parties, but for prolonged projects it is normally produced monthly.

A dedicated scheduler, proper staffing, and adequate computer and software packages are important to accomplish this task properly. On complex projects, planning and scheduling is a full-time requirement.

### **46.3.5 Safety and Environmental Considerations**

Construction of any bridge is a hazardous activity by nature. No person may be required to work in surroundings or under conditions that are unsafe or dangerous to his or her health. The construction project management team must initiate and maintain a safety and health program and perform a job hazard analysis with the purpose of eliminating or reducing risks of accidents, incidents, and injuries during the performance of the work. All features of work must be evaluated and assessed in order to identify potential hazards and implement necessary precautions or engineer controls to prevent accidents, incidents, and injuries.

Frequent safety inspections and continued assessment are instrumental in maintaining the safety aspects and preventive measures and considerations relating to the proposed features of work. In the safety area, it is important for the manager to be able to distinguish between accidents/incidents and injuries. Lack of recorded work-related injuries is not necessarily a measure of how safe the work environment is on the project site. The goal of every manager is to complete the job in an accident/incident- and injury-free manner, as every occurrence costs time and money.

Today's construction operational speed, government involvement, and community awareness are placing more emphasis, responsibilities, and demands on the designer and construction contractor to protect the environment and human health. Environmental impact statements, storm water management, soil erosion control plans, dust control plan, odor control measures, analytical and disposal requirements, Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements for overland shipment, activity hazard analysis, and recycling are some of the many aspects that the construction project management team can no longer ignore or set aside. As with project scheduling and planning, environmental and safety aspects of construction may require significant attention from a member of the construction management team. When not properly coordinated and executed, environmental considerations and safety requirements can delay the execution of the project and cost significant amounts of money.

### **46.3.6 Implementation and Operations**

Construction implementation and operations is the process by which the construction project manager balances all construction and contract activities and requirements in order to accomplish the tasks. The bulk of construction implementation and operations occurs during the construction phase of the project. The construction project management team must operate in synchronization and maintain good communication channels in order to succeed in this intense and demanding phase. Many individuals in this field may contend that the implementation and operation phase of the construction starts with the site mobilization. Although it may be an indicator of actual physical activity taking place on site, construction implementation and operations may include actions and activities prior to the mobilization to the project site.

Here, a delicate balance is attempted to be maintained between all activities taking place and those activities being projected. Current activities are performed and accomplished by field personnel with close monitoring by the construction management staff. Near (approximately 1 week ahead), intermediate (approximately 2 to 4 weeks), and distant future (over 4 weeks) requirements are identified, planned, and scheduled in order to procure equipment and supplies, schedule work crews, and maintain efficiencies and progress. Coordinating progress and other meetings and conferences may take place during the implementation and operation phase.

### **46.3.7 Value Engineering**

Some contracts include an opportunity for contractors to submit a value engineering (VE) recommendation. This recommendation is provided to either the owner or designer. The purpose of the VE is to promote or increase the value of the finished product while reducing the dollars spent or invested; in other words, to provide the desired function for minimum cost(s). VE is not intended to reduce performance, reliability, maintainability, or life expectancy below the level required to perform the basic function. Important VE evaluation criteria performed are in terms of “collateral savings” — the measurable net reductions in the owner’s/agency’s overall costs of construction, operations, maintenance, and/or logistics support. In most cases, collateral savings are shared between the owner/agency and the proponent of the VE by reducing the contract price or estimated cost in the amount of the instant contract savings and by providing the proponents of the VE a share of the savings by adding the amount calculated to the contract price or fee.

### **46.3.8 Quality Management**

During the construction of a bridge, construction quality management (CQM) play a major role in quality control and assurance. CQM refers to all control measures and assurance activities instituted by the parties to achieve the quality established by the contract requirements and specifications. It encompasses all phases of the work, such as approval of submittals, procurements, storage of materials and equipment, coordination of subcontractor activities, and the inspections and the tests required to ensure that the specified materials are used and that installations are acceptable to produce the required product. The key elements of the CQM are the contractor quality control (CQC) and quality assurance (QA). To be effective, there must be a planned program of actions, and lines of authority and responsibilities must be established. CQC is primarily the construction contractor’s responsibility while QA is primarily performed by an independent agency (or other than the construction contractor) on behalf of the designer or owner. In some instances, QA may be performed by the designer. In this manner, a system of checks and balances is achieved minimizing the conflicts between quality and efficiency normally developed during construction. Consequently, CQM is a combined responsibility.

In the CQC, the construction contractor is primarily responsible for (1) producing the quality product on time and in compliance with the terms of the contract; (2) verifying and checking the adequacy of the construction contractor’s quality control program of the scope and character necessary to achieve the quality of construction outlined in the contract; and (3) producing and maintaining acceptable records of its QC activities. In the QA, the designated agency is primarily responsible for (1) establishing standards and QC requirements; (2) verifying and checking adequacy of the construction contractor’s QC (QA for acceptance), performing special tests and inspections as required in the contract, and determining that reported deficiencies have been corrected; and (3) assuring timely completion.

### **46.3.9 Partnership and Teamwork**

A great deal of construction contract success, as discussed before, is attributable to partnering. Partnering should be undertaken and initiated at the earliest stage during the construction project management cycle. Some contracts may have a special clause which is intended to encourage the construction contractor to establish clear channels of communication and effective working relationships. The best approach to partnering is for the parties to volunteer to participate.

Partnering differs from the team-building concept. Team building may encourage establishing open communications and relationships when all parties share liabilities, risk, and money exposure, but not necessarily share costs of risks. The immediate goal of partnering is to establish mutual agreement(s) at the initial phases of the project on the following areas: identification of common goals; identification of common interests; establishment of lines of communication; establishment

of lines of authority and decision making; commitment to cooperative problem solving, among others.

Partnering takes the elements of luck, hope, and personality out of determining project success. It facilitates workshops in which stakeholders in a specific project or program come together as a team that results in breakthrough success for all parties involved. For example, the Office of Structure Construction (OSC) of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has a vision of delivery of structure construction products of the highest possible quality in partnership with their clients. And this work is not only of high quality, but is delivered in the safest, most cost-effective, and fastest manner possible. In partnership with the districts or other clients, the Office of Structure Construction (OSC) does the following to fulfill its purpose:

- Administers and inspects the construction of the Caltrans transportation structures and related facilities in a safe and efficient manner;
- Provides specialized equipment and training, standards, guidelines, and procedural manuals to ensure consistency of inspection and administration by statewide OSC staff;
- Provides consultations on safety for OSC staff and district staff performing structure construction inspection work;
- Conducts reviews and provides technical consultation and assistance for trenching and shoring temporary support and falsework construction reviews;
- Provides technical recommendations on the preparations of structure claims and the contract change orders (CCOs);
- Provides construction engineering oversight on structure work on non-state-administrated projects;
- Conducts BCO review.

### **46.3.10 Project Completion and Turnover of Facility**

Success in construction project management may be greatly impacted during project completion and turnover of the facilities to the user or owner. The beginning of the project completion and turnover phase may be identified by one of the following: punch list developed, prefinal inspections scheduled, support areas demobilized, site restoration initiated, just to mention a few. Many of the problems encountered during this last phase may be avoided or prevented with proper user or owner participation and involvement during the previous phases, particularly during the construction where changes and modifications may have altered the original design. A good practice in preventing conflicts during the completion and turnover of the facilities is to invite the owner or user to all construction progress meetings and acceptance inspections. In that manner, the user or owner is completely integrated during the construction with ample opportunity to provide feedback and be part of the decision-making process. In addition, by active participation, the owner or user is being informed and made aware of changes, modifications, and/or problems associated with the project.

## **46.4 Major Construction Considerations**

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Concrete bridge construction involves site investigation; structure design; selection of materials — steel, concrete, aggregates, and mix design; workmanship of placement and curing of concrete; handling and maintenance of the structure throughout its life. Actually, site investigations are made of any structure, regardless of how insignificant it may be. The site investigation is very important for intelligent design of the bridge structures and has a significant influence on selection of the material and mix. A milestone is to investigate the fitness of the location to satisfy the requirements of the bridge structure. Thus, investigation of the competence of the foundation to carry the service load safely and an investigation of the existence of forces or substances that may attack the concrete



structure can proceed. Of course, the distress or failure may have several contributing causal factors: unsuitable materials, construction methods, loading conditions; faulty mix design; design mistakes; conditions of exposure; curing condition, or environmental factors.

## 46.5 Structural Materials

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### 46.5.1 Normal Concrete

#### Important Properties

Concrete is the only material that can be made on site, and is practically the most dependable and versatile construction material used in bridge construction. Good durable concrete is quality concrete that meets all structural and aesthetic requirements for a period of structure life at minimum cost. We are looking for such properties as workability in the fresh condition; strength in accordance with design, specifications, and special provisions; durability; volume stability; freedom from blemishes (scaling, rock pockets, etc.); impermeability; economy; and aesthetic appearance. Concrete when properly designed and fabricated can actually be crack-free not only under normal service loads, but also under moderate overload, which is very attractive for bridges that are exposed to an especially corrosive atmosphere.

The codes and specifications usually specify the minimum required strength for various parts of a bridge structure. The required concrete strength is determined by design engineers. For cast-in-place concrete bridges, a compressive strength of 3250 to 5000 psi (22 to 33 MPa) is usual. For precast structure compressive strength of 4000 to 6000 psi (27 to 40 MPa) is often used. For special precast, prestressed structures compressive strength of 6000 to 8000 psi (40 to 56 MPa) is used. Other properties of concrete are related to the strength, although not necessarily dependent on the strength.

Workability is the most important property of fresh concrete and depends on the properties and proportioning of the materials: fine and coarse aggregates, cement, water, and admixtures. Consistency, cohesiveness, and plasticity are elements of workability. Consistency is related to the fluidity of mix. Just adding water to a batch of concrete will make the concrete more fluid or “wetter,” but the quality of the concrete will diminish. Consistency increases when water is added and an average of 3% in total water per batch will change the slump about 1 in. (2.54 cm). The research and practice show that workability is a maximum in concrete of medium consistency, between 3 in. (7.62 cm) and 6 in. (15.24 cm) slump. Very dry or wet mixes produce less-workable concrete. Use of relatively harsh and dry mixes is allowed in structures with large cross sections, but congested areas containing much reinforcement steel and embedded items require mixes with a high degree of workability.

A good and plastic mixture is neither harsh nor sticky and will not segregate easily. Cohesiveness is not a function of slump, as very wet (high-slump) concrete lacks plasticity. On the other hand, a low-slump mix can have a high degree of plasticity. A harsh concrete lacks plasticity and cohesiveness and segregates easily.

Workability has a great effect on the cost of placing concrete. Unworkable concrete, not only requires more labor and effort in placing, but also produces rock pockets and sand streaks, especially in small congested forms. It is a misconception that compaction or consolidation of concrete in the form can be done with minimum effort if concrete is fluid or liquid to flow into place. It is obvious that such concrete will flow in place but segregate badly, so that large aggregate will settle out of the mortar and excess water will rise to the top surface. And unfortunately, this error in workmanship will become apparent after days, even months later, showing up as cracks, low strength, and general inferiority of concrete. The use of high-range water-reducing admixtures (superplasticizers) allows placing of high-slump, self-leveling concrete. They increase strength of concrete and provide great workability without adding an excessive amount of water. As an example of such products used in the Caltrans is PolyHeed 997 which meets the requirements for a Type A, water-reducing admixture

specified in ASTM C 494-92, Corps of Engineers CRD-C 87-93, and AASHTO M 194-87, the Standard Specifications for chemical admixtures for concrete.

### **Special Consideration for Cold-Weather Construction**

Cold weather can damage a concrete structure by freezing of fresh concrete before the cement has achieved final set and by repeated cycles of freezing of consequent expansion of water in pores and openings in hardened concrete. Causes of poor frost resistance include poor design of construction joints, segregation of concrete during placement; leaky formwork; poor workmanship, resulting in honeycomb and sand streaks; insufficient or absent drainage, permitting water to accumulate against concrete. In order to provide resistance against frost adequate drainage should be designed. If horizontal construction joints are necessary, they should be located below the low-water or above the high-water line about 2 to 3 ft (0.6 to 1 m). Previously placed concrete must be cleaned up completely. Concrete mix should have a 7% (max) air for ½ in. (12.7 mm) or ¾ in. (19 mm) (max) aggregate, ranging down to 3 to 4% for cobble mixes. It is essential to use structurally sound aggregates with low porosity. The objective of frost-resistant concrete mix is to produce good concrete with smooth, dense, and impermeable surface. This can be implemented by good construction techniques used in careful placement of concrete as near as possible to its final resting place, avoiding segregation, sand streaks, and honeycomb under proper supervision, quality control, and assurance.

Sudden changes in temperature can stress concrete and cause cracking or crazing. A similar condition exists when cold water is applied to freshly stripped warm concrete, particularly during hot weather. For the best results, the temperature difference should not exceed 25°F between concrete and curing water. In cases when anchor bolt holes were left exposed to weather, filled with water, freezing of water exerted sufficient force to crack concrete. This may happen on the bridge pier cap under construction.

### **Concrete Reinforcement and Placement**

The optimum conditions for structural use is a medium slump of concrete and compaction by vibrators. A good concrete with low slump for the placing conditions can be ruined by insufficient or improper consolidation. Even workable concrete may not satisfy the needs of the bridge structure if it is not properly consolidated, preferably by vibration. An abrupt change in size, and congestion of reinforcement not only makes proper placing of concrete difficult but also causes cracks to develop. Misplacement of reinforcement within concrete will greatly contribute to development of structural cracks. The distress and failure of concrete are mostly caused by ignorance, carelessness, wrong assumptions, etc.

### **Concrete Mix and Trial Batches**

The objective of concrete mix designs and trial batches is to produce cost-effective concrete with sufficient workability, strength, durability, and impermeability to meet the conditions of placing, finishing characteristics, exposure, loading, and other requirements of bridge structures. A complete discussion of concrete mixes and materials can be found in many texts such as *Concrete Manual* by Waddel [1]. The purpose of trial batches is to determine strength, water–cement ratio, combined grading of aggregates, slump, type and proportioning of cement, aggregates, entrained air, and admixtures as well as scheduling of trial batches and uniformity. Trial batches should always be made for bridge structures, especially for large and important ones. They should also be made in cases where there is no adequate information available for existing materials used in concrete mixes, and they are subjected to revision in the field as conditions require.

### **Consideration to Exposure Condition**

Protection of waterfront structures should be considered when they are being designed. Designers often carefully consider structural and aesthetic aspects without consideration of exposure conditions. Chemical attack is aggravated in the presence of water, especially in transporting the chemicals into the concrete through cracks, honeycombs, or pores in surfaces. Use of chamfers and fillers is good construction practice. Chamfering helps prevent spalling and chipping from moving objects. Fillets in reentrant corners eliminate possible scours or cracking. Reinforcement should be well

covered with sound concrete and in most cases the 3 in. (7.62 cm) coverage is specified. First-class nonreactive and well-graded aggregates in accordance with the UBC standard should be used. Cement Type II or Type Y with a low of  $C_3$  should be used. Careful consideration should be given to the use of an approved pozzolan with a record of successfully usage in a similar exposure. Mix design should contain an adequate amount of entrained air and other parameters in accordance with specifications or a special provision for a particular project. The concrete should be workable with slump and water–cement ratio as low as possible and containing at least 560 pcy (332 kg/m<sup>3</sup>). To reduce mixing water for the same workability and, by the same token, to enhance strength and durability, a water-reducing admixture is preferred. The use of calcium chloride and Type III cement for acceleration of hardening and strength development is precluded. Concrete should be handled and placed with special care to avoid segregation and prevent honeycomb and sand streaks. The proper cure should be taken for at least seven days before exposure.

### 46.5.2 High-Performance Concrete

High-performance concrete (HPC) is composed of the same materials used in normal concrete, but proportioned and mixed to yield a stronger, more durable product. HPC structures last much longer and suffer less damage from heavy traffic and climatic condition than those made with conventional concrete. To promote the use of HPC in highway structures in the United States, a group of concrete experts representing the state DOTs, academia, the highway industry, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has developed a working definition of HPC, which includes performance criteria and the standard tests to evaluate performance when specifying an HPC mixture. The designer determines what level of strength, creep, shrinkage, elasticity, freeze/thaw durability, abrasion resistance, scaling resistance, and chloride permeability are needed. The definition specifies what tests grade of HPC satisfies those requirements and what tests to perform to confirm that the concrete meets that grade.

An example of the mix design for the 12,000-psi high-strength concrete used in the Orange County courthouse in Florida follows:

Gradient	Weight (pounds)
Cement, Type 1	900
Fly ash, Class F	72
Silica fume	62
Natural sand	980
No. 8 granite aggregate	1,780
Water	250
Water reducer	2 oz per cubic hundredweight
Superplasticizer	35 oz per cubic hundredweight

The Virginia and Texas DOTs have already started using HPC that is ultra-high-strength concrete 12,000 to 15,000 psi (80 to 100 MPa) in bridge construction and rehabilitation of the existing bridges [2].

### 46.5.3 Steel

All reinforcing steel for bridges is required to conform to specifications of ASTM Designation A615, Grade 60 or low-alloy steel deformed bars conforming to ASTM Designation A706. Prestressing steel: high-tensile wire conforming to ASTM Designations: A421, including Supplement I, High-tensile wire strand A416, Uncoated high-strength steel bars: A722, are usually used. All prestressing steel needs to be protected against physical damage and rust or other results of corrosion at all times from manufacture to grouting or encasing in concrete. Prestressing steel that has physical damage at any time needs to be rejected. Prestressing steel for post-tensioning that is installed in members prior to placing and curing of the concrete needs to be continuously protected against rust or other

corrosion until grouted, by means of a corrosion inhibitor placed in the ducts or applied to the steel in the duct.

The corrosion inhibitor should conform to the specified requirements. When steam curing is used, prestressing steel for post-tensioning should not be installed until the steam curing is completed. All water used for flushing ducts should contain either quick lime (calcium oxide) or slaked lime (calcium hydroxide) in the amount of 0.01 kg/l. All compressed air used to blow out ducts should be oil free.

## 46.6 Construction Operations

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### 46.6.1 Prestressing Methods

If steel reinforcement in reinforced concrete structures is tensioned against the concrete, the structure becomes a prestressed concrete structure. This can be accomplished by using pretensioning and post-tensioning methods.

#### Pretensioning

Pretensioning is accomplished by stressing tendons, steel wires, or strands to a predetermined amount. While stress is maintained in the tendons, concrete is placed in the structure. After the concrete in the structure has hardened, the tendons are released and the concrete bonded to the tendons becomes prestressed.

Widely used in pretensioning techniques are hydraulic jacks and strands composed of several wires twisted around a straight center wire. Pretensioning is a major method used in the manufacture of prestressed concrete in the United States. The basic principles and some of the methods currently used in the United States were imported from Europe, but much has been done in the United States to develop and adapt manufacturing procedures. One such adaptation employs pretensioned tendons which do not pass straight through the concrete member, but are deflected or draped into a trajectory that approximates a curve. This method is very widely practiced in the fabrication of precast bridge girders in the United States.

#### Post-Tensioning

A member is called as posttensioned when the tendons are tensioned after the concrete has hardened and attained sufficient strength (usually 70% final strength) to withstand the prestressing force, and each end of the tendons are anchored. [Figure 46.1](#) shows a typical post-tensioning system. A common method used in the United States to prevent tendons from bonding to the concrete during placing and curing of the concrete is to encase the tendon in a mortar-tight metal tube or flexible metal hose before placing it in the forms. The metal hose or tube is referred to as a sheath or duct and remains in the structure. After the tendons have been stressed, the void between the tendons and the duct is filled with grout. The tendons become bonded to the structural concrete and protected from corrosion [3]. Construction engineers can utilize prestressing very effectively to overcome excessive temporary stresses or deflections during construction, for example, using cantilevering techniques in lieu of falsework.

Prestressing is not a fixed state of stress and deformation, but is time dependent. Both concrete and steel may be deformed inelastically under continued stress. After being precompressed, concrete continues to shorten with time (creep). Loss of moisture with time also contribute to a shortening (shrinkage). In order to reduce prestress losses due to creep and shrinkage and to increase the level of precompression, use of higher-strength not only steel but also higher-strength concrete, that has low creep, shrinkage, and thermal response is recommended. New chemical admixtures such as high-range water-reducing admixtures (superplasticizers) and slag used for producing high-performance concrete and for ultra-high-strength concrete. The new developments are targeted to producing high-strength steel that is “stabilized” against stress relaxation which leads to a reduction of stress in tendons, thus reducing the prestress in concrete.

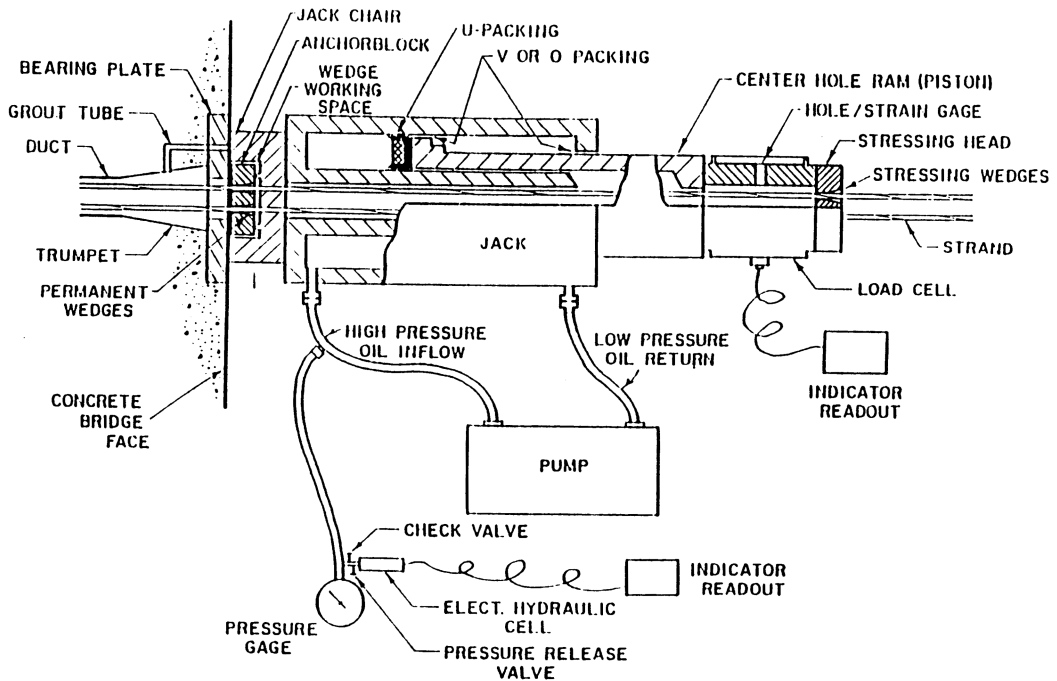


FIGURE 46.1 Typical post-tensioning system.

## 46.6.2 Fabrication and Erection Stages

During construction, not all elements of a bridge have the same stresses they were designed for. That is the reason it is a very important part of construction engineering to be aware of this and to make sure that appropriate steps have been taken. For example, additional reinforcement will be added to the members in the fabrication stage and delivered to the job site for erection.

In the case of cast-in-place box-girder bridge construction the sequences of prestressing tendons have to be engineered step-by-step to ensure that the structure will have all parameters for future service load after completion of this stage.

The sequence of the erection itself may produce additional stresses that structures or portions of the structures were not designed for. These stresses and the stability of structures during erection are a big concern that is often overlooked by designers and contractors — construction sequences play a very important role in the erection of a segmental type of bridge. It seems that we have to give more attention to analysis of the role of the construction engineering implementation of such erections. And, yes, sometimes the importance of construction engineering to accomplish safe and efficient fabrication and erection of bridge structures (precast, prestressed girders, cast-in-pile) is not sufficiently emphasized by design engineers and/or fabrication, erection contractors.

Unfortunately, we have to admit that the design set of drawings even for an important bridge does not include the erection scheme. And, of course, we can show many examples of misplaced erection efforts on the part of the designer, but our goal is to show why it happened and to make efforts to pay more attention to the fabrication and erection stages. Even if such an erection scheme is included in the design drawings, contractors are not supposed to rely solely on what is provided by the designer's erection plan.

Sometimes a design can be impractical, or it may not be suitable in terms of the erection contractor's equipment and experience. Because the erection plans usually are very generalized and because not enough emphasis is given to the importance of this stage, it is important that the



**FIGURE 46.2** Pine Valley Creek Bridge — construction at Pier 4.

designer understand the contractor's proposed method so that the designer can determine if these methods are compatible with the plans, specifications, and requirements of the contract. This is the time that any differences should be resolved. The designer should also discuss any contingency plan in case the contractor has problems. In many instances, the designer is involved throughout the construction phase for design and specification clarification or interpretation, incorporation of construction changes or modifications to the project, and possible O&M reviews/action.

### **46.6.3 Construction of Segmental Bridges**

The first precast segmental box-girder bridge was built by Jean Muller, the Choisy-le-Roi-Bridge crossing the Seine River in 1962. In North America (Canada), a cast-in-place segmental bridge on the Laurentian Autoroute, near Ste. Adele, Quebec, in 1964 and a precast segmental bridge crossing the Lievre River near Notre Dame du Laus also in Quebec in 1967 were constructed. In the United States, the first precast segmental bridge was completed in 1973 in Corpus Christi (Texas). The Pine Valley Creek Bridge with five spans (270 + 340 + 450 + 380 + 270 ft) supported by 340-ft-high pier as shown in [Figures 46.2 to 46.5](#) is the first cast-in-place segmental bridge constructed in the United States in 1974 using the cantilever method. The ends of the bridge are skewed to fit the bridge into the canyon. The superstructure consists of two parallel box structures each providing a roadway width of 40 ft between railings. The superstructures are separated by a 38-ft median.

Segmental cantilever construction is a fairly recent development, and the concept has been improved and used successfully to build bridges throughout the world. Its unique characteristic of needing no ground-supported falsework makes the method attractive for use over congested streets, waterways, deep gorges, or ocean inlets. It has been used for spans of less than 100 ft, all the way to the current record span of 755 ft over the Urato River in Japan. Another advantage of the method lies in its economy and efficiency of material use. Construction of segmental bridges can be classified by three methods: balanced cantilever, span-by-span, and progressive placement or incremental launching. For detailed discussion see Chapter 11.



**FIGURE 46.3** Pine Valley Creek Bridge — pier construction



**FIGURE 46.4** Pine Valley Creek Bridge — girder construction



**FIGURE 46.5** Pine Valley Creek Bridge — construction completion.

#### **46.6.4 Construction of HPC Bridges**

The first U.S. bridge was built with HPC under the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) in Texas in 1996. The FHWA and the Texas DOT in cooperation with the Center for Transportation Research (CTR) at the University of Texas at Austin sponsored a workshop to showcase HPC for bridges in Houston in 1996. The purpose of the event was to introduce the new guidelines to construction professionals and design engineers, and to show how HPC was being used to build more durable structures. It was also focused on the pros and cons of using HPC, mix proportioning, structural design, HPC in precast prestressed and cast-in-place members, long-term performance, and HPC projects in Nebraska, New Hampshire, and Virginia. The showcase had a distinctly regional emphasis because local differences in cements, aggregates, and prestressing fabricators have a considerable impact on the design and construction of concrete structures. In Texas, concrete can be produced with compressive strength of 13,000 to 15,000 psi (900 to 1000 MPa).

The Louetta Road Overpass using HPC is expected to have a useful life of 75 to 100 years, roughly double the average life of a standard bridge. A longer life span means not only lower user cost, but motorists will encounter fewer lane closures and other delays caused by maintenance work. At the present time 15 HPC bridge have been built in the United States.

The first bridge to utilize HPC fully in all aspects of design and construction is the Louetta Road Overpass on State Highway 249 in Houston. The project consists of two U-beam bridges carrying two adjacent lanes of traffic. The spans range from 121.5 to 135.5 ft (37 to 41.3 m) long. The HPC is about twice as strong as conventional concrete. It costs an average of \$260/m<sup>2</sup> (\$24/ft<sup>2</sup>) of deck area, a price compatible with the 12 conventional concrete bridges on the same project. The second Texas HPC bridge located in San Angelo carries the eastbound lanes of U.S. Route 67 over the North Concho River, U.S. 87, and the South Orient railroad. The 954-ft (291-m) HPC I-beam bridge runs parallel to a conventional concrete bridge. The HPC was chosen for the east-bound lanes because the span crossing the North Concho River was 157 ft (48 m) long. This distance exceeds the capacity of Texas conventional prestressed concrete U-beam simple-span construction. The San Angelo Bridge presents an ideal opportunity for comparing HPC and conventional concrete. The first spans





**FIGURE 46.6** Falsework at I-80 HOV construction, Richmond, CA.

of two bridges are the same length and width making it easy to compare the cost and performance between HPC and conventional concrete. The comparison indicated that conventional concrete lanes of the first span required seven beams with 5.6 ft (1.7 m) spacing, while the HPC span required only four beams with 11 ft (3.4 m) spacing.

## 46.7 Falsework

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Falsework may be defined as a temporary framework on which the permanent structure is supported during its construction. The term *falsework* is universally associated with the construction of cast-in-place concrete structures, particularly bridge superstructures. The falsework provides a stable platform upon which the forms may be built and furnish support for the bridge superstructure.

Falsework is used in both building and bridge construction. The temporary supports used in building work are commonly referred to as “shoring.” It is also important to note the difference between “formwork” and “falsework.” Formwork is used to retain plastic concrete in its desired shape until it has hardened. It is designed to resist the fluid pressure of plastic concrete and additional pressure generated by vibrators. Because formwork does not carry dead load of concrete, it can be removed as soon as the concrete hardens. Falsework does carry the dead load of concrete, and therefore it has to remain in place until the concrete becomes self-supporting. Plywood panels on the underside of a concrete slab serve both as a formwork and as a falsework member. For design, however, such panels are considered to be forms in order to meet all design and specification requirements applied to them.

Bridge falsework can be classified in two types: (1) conventional systems (Figure 46.6) in which the various components (beams, posts, caps, bracings, etc.) are erected individually to form the completed system and (2) proprietary systems in which metal components are assembled into modular units that can be stacked, one above the other, to form a series of towers that compose the vertical load-carrying members of the system.

The contractor is responsible for designing and constructing safe and adequate falsework that provides all necessary rigidity, supports all load composed, and produces the final product (structure) according to the design plans, specifications, and special provisions. It is very important also to keep in mind that approval by the owner of falsework working drawings or falsework inspection will in no way relieve the contractor of full responsibility for the falsework. In the state of California, any falsework height that exceeds 13 ft (4 m) or any individual falsework clear span that exceeds 17 ft (5 m) or where provision for vehicular, pedestrian, or railroad traffic through the falsework is made, the drawings have to be signed by the registered civil engineer in the state of California. The design drawings should include details of the falsework removal operations, methods and sequences of removal, and equipment to be used. The drawings must show the size of all load-supporting members, connections and joints, and bracing systems. For box-girder structures, the drawings must show members supporting sloping exterior girders, deck overhangs, and any attached construction walkway. All design-controlling dimensions, including beam length and spacing, post locations and spacing, overall height of falsework bents, vertical distance between connectors in diagonal bracing must be shown.

It is important that falsework construction substantially conform to the falsework drawings. As a policy consideration, minor deviations to suit field conditions or the substitution of materials will be permitted if it is evident by inspection that the change does not increase the stresses or deflections of any falsework members beyond the allowable values, nor reduce the load-carrying capacity of the overall falsework system. If revision is required, the approval of revised drawings by the state engineer is also required. Any change in the approved falsework design, however minor it may appear to be, has the potential to affect adversely the structural integrity of the falsework system. Therefore, before approving any changes, the engineer has to be sure that such changes will not affect the falsework system as a whole.

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