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Authors' Response: Minimum Confinement Reinforcement for Prestressed Concrete Piles and a Rational Seismic Design Framework

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Abstract

The authors greatly appreciate the reviewer's interest in "Minimum Confinement Reinforcement for Prestressed Concrete Piles and a Rational Seismic Design Framework,"[1] and his useful discussion

Disciplines

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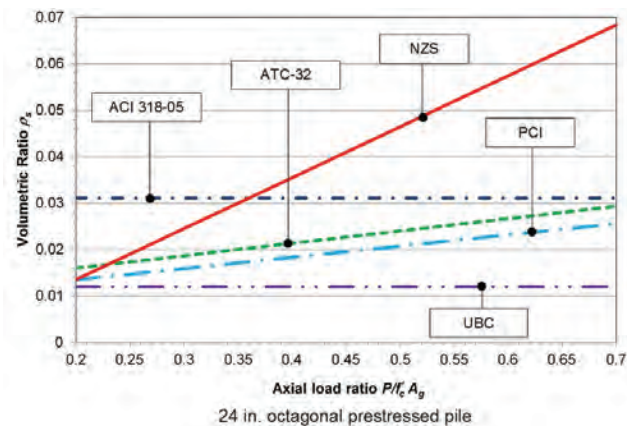
FIGURE 2.

Premature buckling is, of course, not an issue for a pile containing only prestressed strands because the strands will have a significant tension stress when the surrounding concrete fails.

The *Uniform Building Code* requirements[5] shown in the paper must have a misprint because it says that the minimum spiral steel ratio is 0.021 for all sizes. **Figure 2** shows 0.021 for the 14 in. (360 mm) square pile and a smaller value, perhaps 0.012, for the 24 in. (610 mm) octagonal pile.

A simple moment-curvature relationship for a pretensioned pile can be approximated by two straight lines. The first line is from the origin to the point of initial cracking, and second line is from the cracking point to ultimate, considering ultimate to be the point of initial concrete crushing. This is a reasonable, but conservative, approximation because there is typically a great reduction in flexural stiffness accompanying first cracking. Better moment-curvature relationships can be constructed at the expense of considerable arithmetic.

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5. ICBO (International Conference of Building Officials). 1997. *Uniform Building Code*. Whittier, CA: ICBO.

Authors' response

The authors greatly appreciate the reviewer's interest in "Minimum Confinement Reinforcement for Prestressed Concrete Piles and a Rational Seismic Design Framework,"[1] and his useful discussion.

The reviewer's first point was about the lack of reference to ACI 543-12,[2] which was published by ACI Committee 543. When the study was undertaken by the authors, an earlier version of the reference that was published in 2000[3] was included in the literature review. This particular reference was not cited because it adopted the confinement equations published in the *PCI Design*

Handbook: Precast/Prestressed Concrete[4] for piles with circular confinement in high seismic regions. By incorporating the *PCI Design Handbook* in the study, the suggested confinement expression was examined and reported in the paper. ACI 543-12 also cites the *PCI Design Handbook* for circular confinement in piles and discusses the NEHRP 2003[5] and IBC 2006[6] provisions.

Within its scope, the published study examined the literature summarizing the response of piles in the field in order to establish an upper-bound value for seismic curvature demand on piles. However, this effort intentionally excluded pile response or damage that was influenced by soil liquefaction and lateral spread because soil conditions and soil-pile interaction—thus curvature demand on piles—in these cases are different. The study summarized in the paper focused on piles embedded in soils defined according to ASCE 7-10[7] soil classification A through E and assumed no failure of soil. Soil vulnerable to failure falls in soil class F. Although ACI 543-12[2] identifies several examples, the majority of the cited pile damage occurred in poor soil conditions and the curvature demand on piles in most cases was not back calculated, which was what we reported to be scarce in the literature.

For example, a reference cited in ACI 543-12[2] is a 2001 study completed by Bobet et al.[8] that includes a summary of pile response in 59 cases, 37 of which were affected by liquefaction and/or lateral spreading of soil. For several other cases, the pile experienced no damage; insignificant damage; or an undesirable failure mode, such as shear failure or pile pullout. There is only one case from which the curvature demand on the pile could be extracted, and this information was already included in the study by the authors.[9]

It is the opinion of the authors that if the soil has the potential to fail, an approach is to use a suitable ground-improvement technique to enhance the soil behavior[10] and design the pile using the improved soil parameters. Alternatively, the pile design could accommodate the loading from the weak soil (for example, laterally spreading ground). The latter case would increase the pile flexibility. Therefore, if a pile displacement suggested in the paper is targeted, the corresponding pile could be designed with a curvature ductility capacity below 18.

Gamble suggests that the moment-curvature relationship for a pretensioned pile can be approximated by two straight lines with the first line going from the origin to the initial cracking and the second line connecting the cracking point to the ultimate condition, with the ultimate being defined at initial concrete crushing. Although it is relatively simple, this approach and several other options considered in the study have consequences and are considered unsatisfactory. More accurate idealization of the moment-curvature relationship simplifies the confinement equation and its reliability in ensuring the target curvature capacity for the pile section designed with the suggested equation. Therefore, using the idealization suggested in the paper is important to ensure that the targeted curvature capacity can be achieved when using the proposed confinement equation.

The following corrections to the paper are suggested based on the feedback provided by Gamble on other issues:

- The variable ϕ in Eq. (5) of the manuscript defines the strength reduction factor; a value of 1.0 was used when finding the confinement reinforcement quantities for comparison with those obtained from other recommended equations.[1]
- For a detailed description of Eq. (5), the reader is referred to NZS 3101.[11,12]
- The UBC requirements should read as follows: $\rho_s \geq 0.021$ for piles 14 in. (360 mm) and smaller; and $\rho_s \geq 0.012$ for piles 24 in. (610 mm) and larger.[13]

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COMMENTS?