12.8 Abutment Design Loads and Other Parameters

This section provides a brief description of the application of abutment design loads, a summary of load modifiers, load factors and other design parameters used for abutment and wing wall design, and a summary of WisDOT abutment design policy items.

12.8.1 Application of Abutment Design Loads

An abutment is subjected to both horizontal and vertical loads from the superstructure. The number and spacing of the superstructure girders determine the number and location of the concentrated reactions that are resisted by the abutment. The abutment also resists loads from the backfill material and any water that may be present.

Although the vertical and horizontal reactions from the superstructure represent concentrated loads, they are commonly assumed to be distributed over the entire length of the abutment wall or stem that support the reactions. That is, the sum of the reactions, either horizontal or vertical, is divided by the length of the wall to obtain a load per unit length to be used in both the stability analysis and the structural design. This procedure is sufficient for most design purposes.

Approach loads are not considered in the example below. However, designers shall include vertical reactions from reinforced concrete approaches as they directly transmit load from the approaches to the abutment. Reinforced concrete approaches include the concrete approach slab system (refer to FDM 14-10-15) and the structural approach slab system (as described in this chapter).

The first step in computing abutment design loads is to compute the dead load reactions for each girder or beam. To illustrate this, consider a 60-foot simple span structure with a roadway width of 44 feet, consisting of steel beams spaced at 9 feet and carrying an HL-93 live loading.

The dead load forces, DC and DW, acting on the abutments shall include reactions from the superstructure. DC dead loads include structural components and nonstructural attachments, and DW dead loads include wearing surfaces and utilities. If the total DC dead load is 1.10 kips per foot of girder and the total DW dead load is 0.18 kips per foot of girder, then the dead load reaction per girder is computed as follows:

$$R_{DC} = (1.10\ \text{K/ft})\left(\frac{60\ \text{Feet}}{2}\right) = 33.0\ \text{kips}$$

$$R_{DW} = (0.18\ \text{K/ft})\left(\frac{60\ \text{Feet}}{2}\right) = 5.4\ \text{kips}$$

These dead loads are illustrated in Figure 12.8-1. The dead loads are equally distributed over the full length of the abutment.

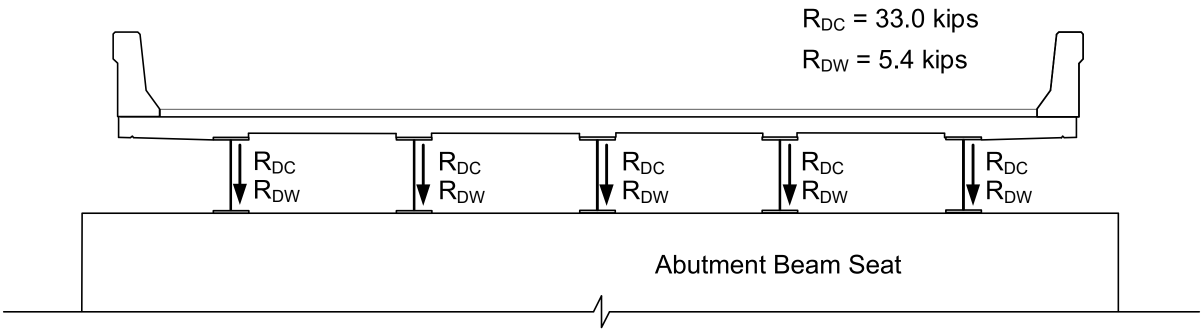

Figure 12.8-1
Dead Load on Abutment Beam Seat

The next step is to compute the live load applied to the abutment. To compute live load reactions to bearings, live load distribution factors must be used to compute the maximum live load reaction experienced by each individual girder. However, to compute live loading on abutments, the maximum number of design lanes are applied to the abutment to obtain the live load per foot of length along the abutment. Live load distribution factors are not used for abutment design, because it is too conservative to apply the maximum live load reaction for each individual girder; each individual girder will generally not experience its maximum live load reaction simultaneously because each one is based on a different configuration of design lane locations.

To illustrate the computation of live loads for abutment design, consider the same 60-foot simple span bridge described previously. Since the roadway width is 44 feet, the maximum number of design lanes is three (44 / 12 = 3.67 $\approx$ 3 lanes). The backwall live load is computed by placing the three design truck axles along the abutment and calculating the load on a per foot basis. The dynamic load allowance and multiple presence factor shall be included. The load is applied to the entire length of the abutment backwall and is assumed to act at the front top corner (bridge side) of the backwall. This load is not applied, however, when designing the abutment wall (stem) or footing. Assuming an abutment length of 48 feet and a backwall width of 2.0 feet, the backwall live load is computed as follows:

$$R_{LL\ backwall} = \frac{(0.85)\left[(3\text{ lanes})\left(\frac{2\text{ wheels}}{\text{lane}}\right)\left(\frac{16\text{ kips}}{\text{wheel}}\right)(1.33)+(3\text{ lanes})(0.64\text{ klf})(2.0\text{ feet})\right]}{48\text{ feet}}$$

$$= 2.33\ \frac{K}{ft}$$

It should be noted that dynamic load allowance is applied to the truck live load only and not to the lane live load. This live load configuration on the abutment backwall is illustrated in Figure 12.8-2.

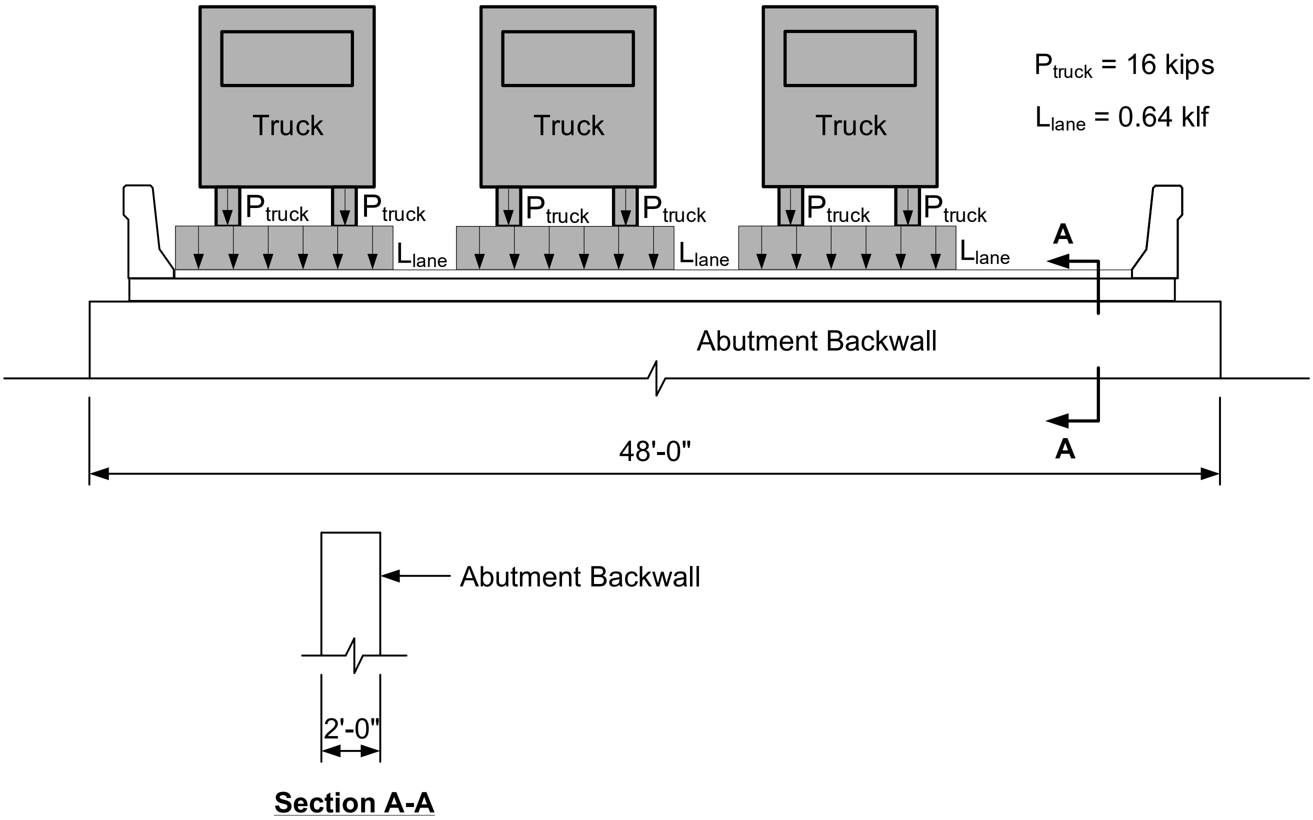

Figure 12.8-2
Live Load on Abutment Backwall

To compute the live loads applied to the abutment beam seat, the live load reactions should be obtained for one lane loaded using girder design software. For this example, for one design lane, the maximum truck live load reaction is 60.8 kips and the maximum lane live load reaction is 19.2 kips. In addition, assume that the abutment is relatively high; the load can therefore be distributed equally over the full length of the abutment. For wall (stem) design, the controlling maximum live loads applied at the beam seat are computed as follows, using three design lanes and using both dynamic load allowance and the multiple presence factor:

$$R_{LL\ stem} = \frac{(3\ \text{lanes})(0.85)\left[(60.8\ \text{kips})(1.33)+(19.2\ \text{kips})\right]}{48\ \text{feet}} = 5.32\ \frac{K}{ft}$$

This live load configuration for an abutment beam seat is illustrated in Figure 12.8-3.

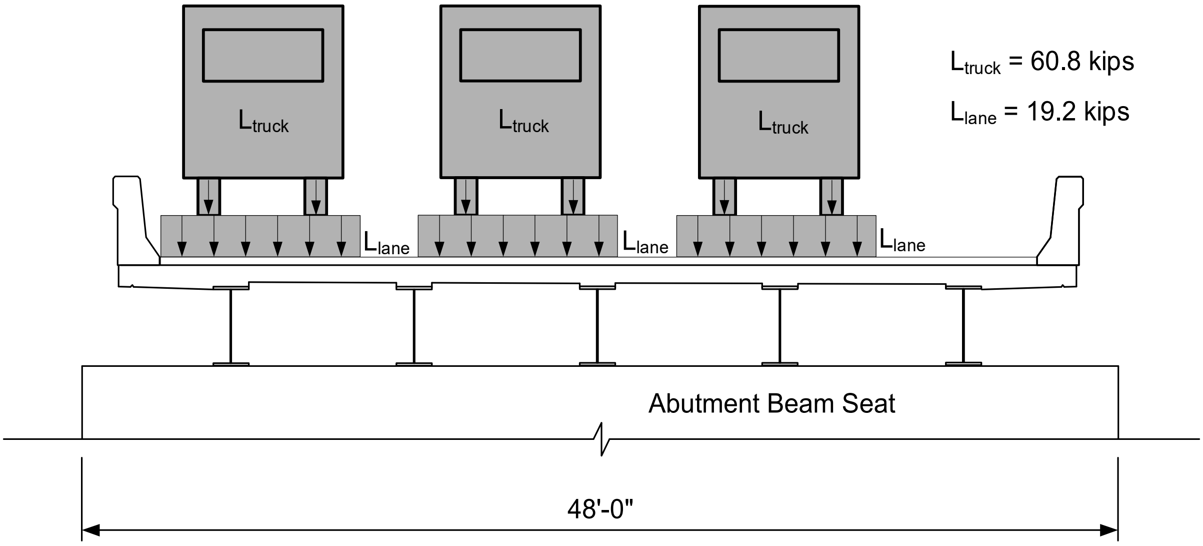

Figure 12.8-3
Live Load on Abutment Beam Seat

For a continuous bridge, the minimum live load applied to the abutment beam seat can be obtained based on the minimum (negative) live load reactions taken from girder design software output.

For footing design, the dynamic load allowance is not included. Therefore, the controlling maximum live loads applied at the beam seat are computed as follows:

$$R_{LL\ footing} = \frac{(3\ \text{lanes})(0.85)[60.8\ \text{kips} + 19.2\ \text{kips}]}{48\ \text{feet}} = 4.25\ \frac{K}{ft}$$

12.8.2 Load Modifiers and Load Factors

Table 12.8-1 presents the load modifiers used for abutment and wing wall design.

Description	Load Modifier
Ductility	1.00
Redundancy	1.00
Operational classification	1.00

Table 12.8-1
Load Modifiers Used in Abutment Design

Table 12.8-2 presents load factors used for abutment and wing wall design. Load factors presented in this table are based on the Strength I and Service I limit states. The load factors for WS and WL equal 0.00 for Strength I. Load factors for the Service I limit state for WS and WL are shown in the table below. Only apply these loads in the longitudinal direction.

Direction of Load	Specific Loading	Load Factor		
		Strength I		Service I
		Max.	Min.	
Load factors for vertical loads	Superstructure DC dead load	1.25	0.90	1.00
	Superstructure DW dead load	1.50	0.65	1.00
	Superstructure live load	1.75	1.75	1.00
	Approach slab dead load	1.25	0.90	1.00
	Approach slab live load	1.75	1.75	1.00
	Wheel loads located directly on the abutment backwall	1.75	1.75	1.00
	Earth surcharge	1.50	0.75	1.00
	Earth pressure	1.35	1.00	1.00
	Water load	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Live load surcharge	1.75	1.75	1.00
Load factors for horizontal loads	Substructure wind load, WS	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Superstructure wind load, WS	0.00	0.00	1.00
	Superstructure wind on LL, WL	0.00	0.00	1.00
	Vehicular braking force from live load	1.75	1.75	1.00
	Temperature and shrinkage*	1.20*	0.50*	1.00
	Earth pressure (active)	1.50	0.90	1.00
	Earth surcharge	1.50	0.75	1.00
	Live load surcharge	1.75	1.75	1.00

Table 12.8-2
Load Factors Used in Abutment Design

* Use the minimum load factor for temperature and shrinkage unless checking for deformations.

12.8.3 Live Load Surcharge

The equivalent heights of soil for vehicular loading on abutments perpendicular to traffic are as presented in **LRFD [Table 3.11.6.4-1]** and in Table 12.8-3. Values are presented for various abutment heights. The abutment height, as used in Table 12.8-3, is taken as the distance between the top surface of the backfill at the back face of the abutment and the bottom of the footing along the pressure surface being considered. Linear interpolation should be used for intermediate abutment heights. The load factors for both vertical and horizontal components of live load surcharge are as specified in **LRFD [Table 3.4.1-1]** and in Table 12.8-2.

Abutment Height (Feet)	h_{eq} (Feet)
5.0	4.0
10.0	3.0
≥ 20.0	2.0

Table 12.8-3
Equivalent Height, h_{eq}, of Soil for Vehicular Loading on Abutments Perpendicular to Traffic

WisDOT policy item:

The equivalent height of soil for vehicular loading on retaining walls parallel to traffic shall be 2.0 feet, regardless of the wall height. For standard unit weight of soil equal to 120 pcf, the resulting live load surcharge is 240 psf.

For abutments without reinforced concrete approaches, the equivalent height of soil for vehicular loading on abutments shall be based on Table 12.8-3. For abutments with reinforced concrete approaches, one half of the equivalent height of soil shall be used to calculate the horizontal load on the abutment.

12.8.4 Other Abutment Design Parameters

The equivalent fluid unit weights of soils are as presented in **LRFD [Table 3.11.5.5-1]**. Values are presented for loose sand or gravel, medium dense sand or gravel, and dense sand or gravel. Values are also presented for level or sloped backfill and for at-rest or active soil conditions.

Table 12.8-4 presents other parameters used in the design of abutments and wing walls. Standard details are based on the values presented in Table 12.8-4.

Description	Value
Bottom reinforcing steel cover	3.0 inches
Top reinforcing steel cover	2.0 inches
Unit weight of concrete	150 pcf
Concrete strength, f'_c	3.5 ksi
Reinforcing steel yield strength, f_y	60 ksi
Reinforcing steel modulus of elasticity, E_s	29,000 ksi
Unit weight of soil	120 pcf
Unit weight of structural backfill	120 pcf
Soil friction angle	30 degrees

Table 12.8-4
Other Parameters Used in Abutment Design

12.8.5 Abutment and Wing Wall Design in Wisconsin

The standard details for abutments and wing walls were developed as an envelope of the loading conditions produced by the standard superstructure types, span lengths and geometric conditions presented in this manual. Prior BOS approval is required and special consideration should be given to designs that are outside of the limits presented in the standard details. The loading conditions, material properties and design methods presented in this chapter should be used for these special designs.

WisDOT policy items:

The resistance of the wing pile to horizontal forces should not be included in the calculations for the wing capacity.

The passive earth resistance can only be developed if there is significant movement of the wing. The soil under the wing may settle or otherwise erode. Therefore, the resistance of the soil friction and the passive earth pressure should not be utilized in resisting the forces on wing walls.

In computing the weight of the approach slab, assume there is settlement under the approach slab and place one-half of the weight of the slab on the abutment. An unfactored dead load value of 1.2 klf shall be used for concrete approach slabs and 2.0 klf for structural approach slabs. An unfactored live load value of 0.900 klf shall be applied to abutment approach slabs when used. Approach reactions shall act along the centroid of the foundation.

The dynamic load allowance shall be applied to the live load for all abutment elements located above the ground line per **LRFD [3.6.2]**.

12.8.6 Horizontal Pile Resistance

The following procedure shall be used to verify the horizontal resistance of the piles for A3 abutments.

Given information:

Horizontal Loads	Unfactored (klf)		Load Factor		Factored Load (klf)
Earth Pressure	5.5	x	1.50	=	8.25
Live Load Surcharge	1.0	x	1.75	=	1.75
Temp. Load from Bearings	0.6	x	0.50	=	0.30
			Total, Hu	=	10.3

Back row pile spacing =	8.0 feet
Front row pile spacing =	5.75 feet
Ultimate Vertical Resistance, 12 3/4" CIP, Pr =	210 kips per pile
Factored Vertical Load on Front Row Pile*	160 kips per pile
Ultimate Horizontal Resistance of back row pile (from Geotech Report), Hr =	14 kips per pile
Ultimate Horizontal Resistance of front row pile (from Geotech Report), Hr =	11 kips per pile

* When calculating the horizontal component of the battered pile, use the actual factored load on the pile resulting from the loading conditions where the horizontal loads are maximized and the vertical loads are minimized.

Calculate horizontal component of the battered pile. The standard pile batter is 1:4.

$$Hr_{battered} = 160\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{1^2 + 4^2}}\right)$$

$Hr_{battered}$ = 38.8 kips per pile

Calculate ultimate resistance provided by the pile configuration:

$$Hr = \left(\frac{14}{8.0}\right) + \left(\frac{11}{5.75}\right) + \left(\frac{38.8}{5.75}\right)$$

Hr = 10.4 klf

Hr > Hu = 10.3 klf   OK