

Steel Column Analysis

- Failure Modes
- Effects of Slenderness
- Stress Analysis of Steel Columns



Leonhard Euler (1707 – 1783)

Euler Buckling (elastic buckling)

$$P_{cr} = \frac{\pi^2 AE}{\left(\frac{KL}{r}\right)^2} = \frac{\pi^2 IE}{(KL)^2}$$

$$r = \sqrt{\frac{I}{A}}$$

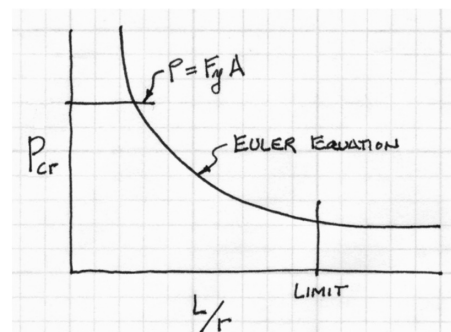
$$I = Ar^2$$

- A = Cross sectional area (in²)
- E = Modulus of elasticity of the material (lb/in²)
- K = Stiffness (curvature mode) factor
- L = Column length between pinned ends (in.)
- r = radius of gyration (in.)

$$f_{cr} = \frac{\pi^2 E}{\left(\frac{KL}{r}\right)^2} \leq F_{cr}$$



portrait by Emanuel Handmann, 1753



Analysis of Steel Columns

Conditions of an Ideal Column

- initially straight
- axially loaded
- uniform stress (no residual stress)
- uniform material (no holes)
- no transverse load
- pinned (or defined) end conditions



Analysis of Steel Columns

Short columns

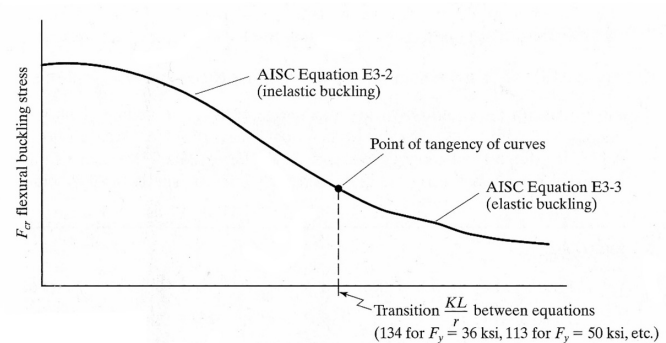
Fail by material crushing
Plastic behavior

Intermediate columns

Crush partially and then buckle
Inelastic behavior
Local buckling – flange or web
Flexural torsional buckling - twisting

Long columns

Fail in Euler buckling
Elastic behavior



$$slenderness = \frac{KL}{r}$$

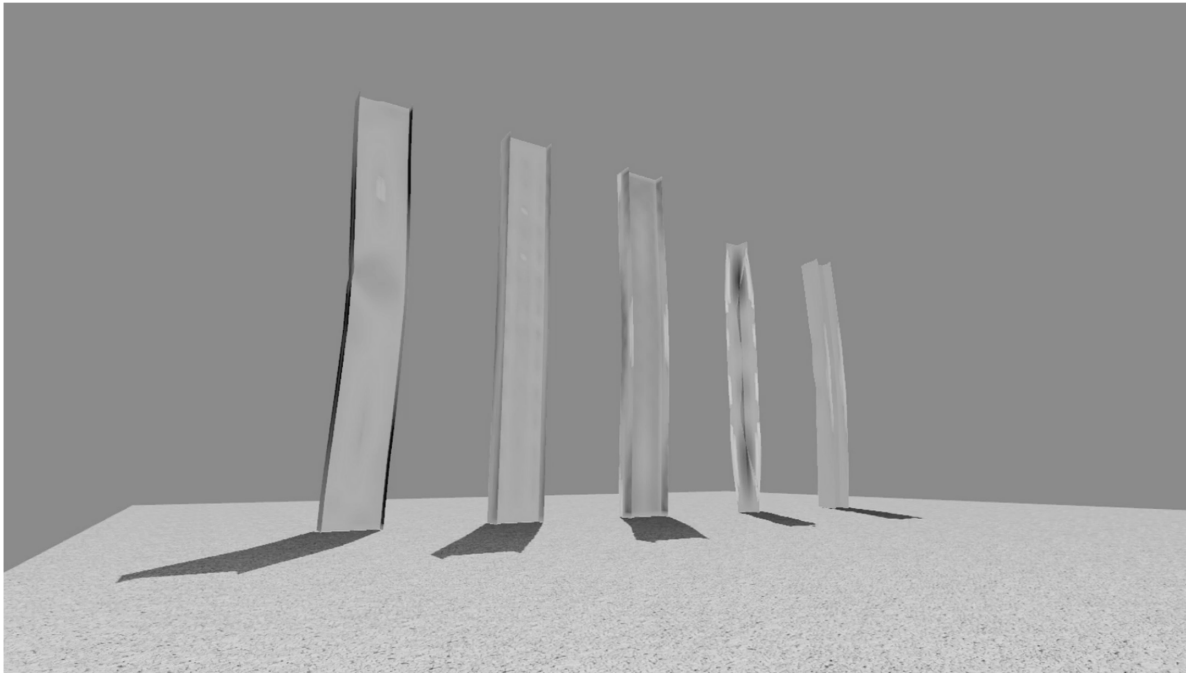
←————→
short intermediate long

Transition
Slenderness $4.71\sqrt{\frac{E}{F_y}}$

Failure Modes

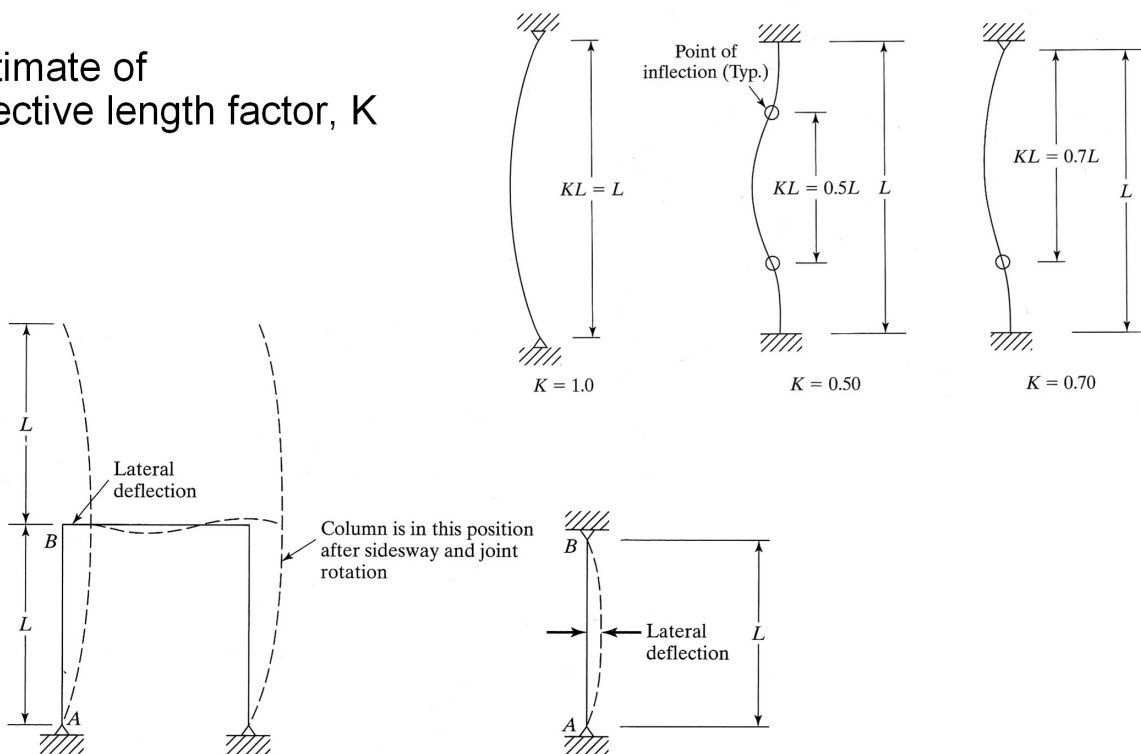
- Column 1: Strong axis flexural buckling
- Column 2: Web local buckling
- Column 3: Weak axis flexural buckling
- Column 4: Torsional buckling
- Column 5: Flange local buckling

“Dancing Columns”
Sherif El-Tawil



Analysis of Steel Columns

Estimate of
effective length factor, K



Analysis of Steel Columns

Estimate of K:

TABLE C-A-7.1 Approximate Values of Effective Length Factor, K						
Buckled shape of column is shown by dashed line	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
	Theoretical K value	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.0	2.0
Recommended design value when ideal conditions are approximated	0.65	0.80	1.2	1.0	2.1	2.0
End condition code						

Determining K factors by Alignment Charts

Sidesway Inhibited:
Braced frame
 $1.0 > K > 0.5$

Sidesway Uninhibited:
Un-braced frame
 $unstable > K > 1.0$

More Pinned:
If I_c/L_c is large
and I_g/L_g is small
The connection is more pinned

More Fixed:
If I_c/L_c is small
and I_g/L_g is large
The connection is more fixed

Sidesway inhibited

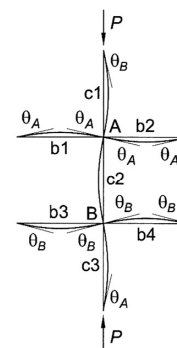
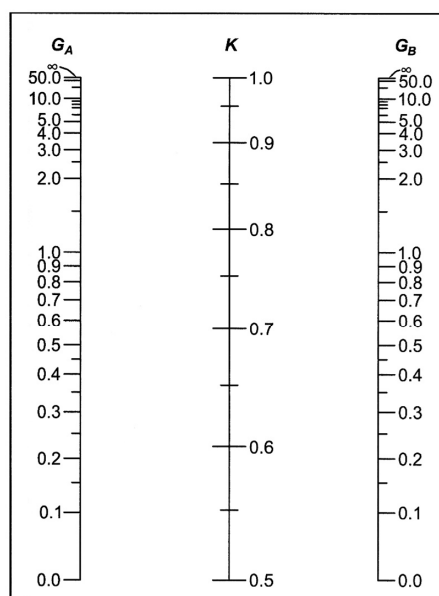


Fig. C-A-7.1. Alignment chart—sidesway inhibited (braced frame).

$$G = \frac{\sum \left(\frac{EI}{L} \right)_{column}}{\sum \left(\frac{EI}{L} \right)_{beam}}$$

Determining K factors by Alignment Charts

Sidesway Inhibited:

Braced frame
 $1.0 > K > 0.5$

Sidesway Uninhibited:

Un-braced frame
unstable $> K > 1.0$

More Pinned:

If I_c/L_c is large
and I_g/L_g is small
The connection is more pinned
and in this case unstable

More Fixed:

If I_c/L_c is small
and I_g/L_g is large
The connection is more fixed

Sidesway uninhibited

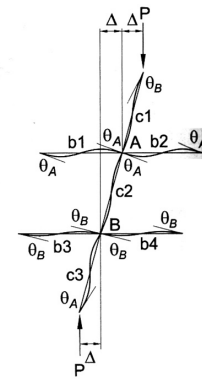
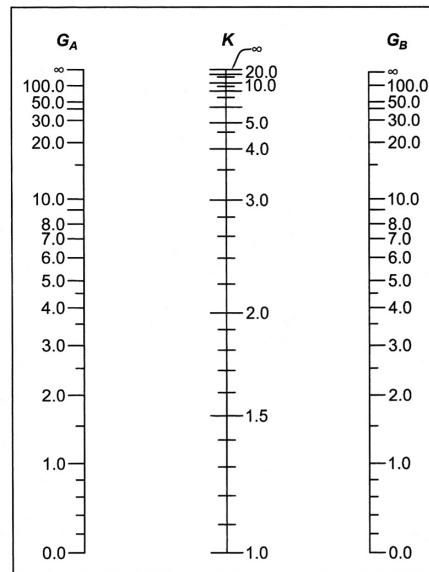


Fig. C-A-7.2. Alignment chart—sidesway uninhibited (moment frame).

$$G = \frac{\sum \left(\frac{EI}{L} \right)_{\text{column}}}{\sum \left(\frac{EI}{L} \right)_{\text{beam}}}$$

Analysis of Steel Columns - LRFD

Euler equation:

$$F_e = \frac{\pi^2 E}{\left(\frac{KL}{r} \right)^2}$$

Short & Intermediate Columns:

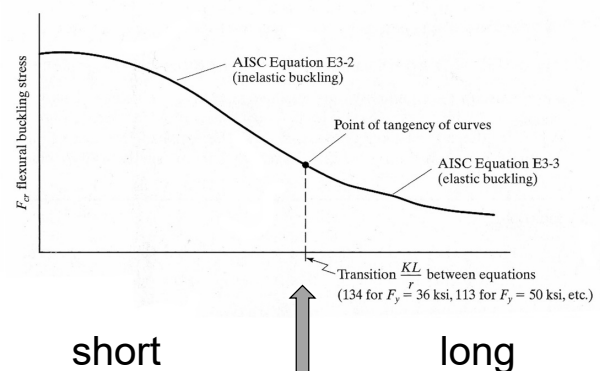
$$F_{cr} = \left[0.658^{\frac{F_y}{F_e}} \right] F_y$$

Equation E3-2

Long Columns:

$$F_{cr} = 0.877 F_e$$

Equation E3-3



Transition
Slenderness $4.71 \sqrt{\frac{E}{F_y}}$

$$P_n = F_{cr} A_g$$

$$\phi_c P_n = \phi_c F_{cr} A_g$$

$$(\phi_c = 0.90)$$

Analysis of Steel Columns pass / fail by LRFD

Data:

- Column – size, length
- Support conditions
- Material properties – F_y
- Factored load – P_u

Required:

- $P_u \leq \phi P_n$ (pass)

1. Calculate slenderness ratios: L_c/r_x and L_c/r_y ($L_c = KL$)
The largest ratio governs.
2. Check slenderness ratio against upper limit of 200 (recommended)
3. Calculate transition slenderness $4.71\sqrt{E/F_y}$
and determine column type (short or long)
4. Calculate F_{cr} based on slenderness
5. Determine ϕP_n and compare to P_u
 $P_n = F_{cr} A_g \quad \phi = 0.9$
6. If $P_u \leq \phi P_n$, then OK

$$F_{cr} = \left[0.658^{\frac{F_y}{F_e}} \right] F_y \quad \text{Short}$$

$$F_{cr} = 0.877 F_e \quad \text{Long}$$



Example - Analysis of Steel Columns pass / fail by ASD

Data:

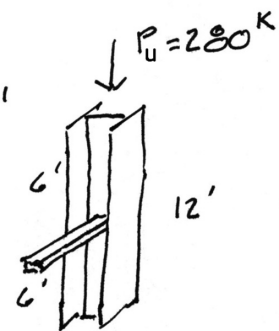
- Column – size, length
- Support conditions
- Material properties – F_y
- Factored Load – P_u

Required:

- $P_u \leq \phi P_n$ (pass)

DATA :

$W 8 \times 35$
 $r_x = 3.51''$
 $r_y = 2.03''$
 $A = 10.3 \text{ in}^2$
 $l_x = 12'$ $l_y = 6'$
 $K_x = K_y = 1.0$



The diagram illustrates the standard dimensions of a W-shape cross-section. Key dimensions labeled include:

- t_f : Flange thickness
- k : Distance from the centerline of the web to the toe of the flange
- d : Overall depth of the section
- t_w : Web thickness
- b_f : Overall flange width
- $X-X$ and $Y-Y$: Principal axes of the section

Table 1-1 (continued)
W-Shapes
Dimensions

Shape	Area, A	Depth, d	Web		Flange		Distance							
			Thickness, t _w	t _w 2	Width, b _f	Thickness, t _f	k		k ₁	T	Workable Gage			
							k _{des}	k _{det}						
	in. ²	in.	in.	in.	in.	in.	in.	in.	in.	in.	in.	in.		
W8x67	19.7	9.00	9	0.570	9/16	8.28	8 1/4	0.935	15/16	1.33	1 5/8	15/16	5 3/4	5 1/2
x58	17.1	8.75	8 3/4	0.510	1/2	8.22	8 1/4	0.810	13/16	1.20	1 1/2	7/8		
x48	14.1	8.50	8 1/2	0.400	3/8	8.11	8 1/8	0.685	1 1/16	1.08	1 3/8	13/16		
x40	11.7	8.25	8 1/4	0.360	3/8	8.07	8 1/8	0.560	9/16	0.954	1 1/4	13/16		
x35	10.3	8.12	8 1/8	0.310	3/8	8.02	8	0.495	1/2	0.889	13/16	13/16		
x31	9.13	8.00	8	0.285	5/16	8.00	8	0.435	7/16	0.829	1 1/8	3/4		

Table 1-1 (continued)
W-Shapes
Properties

Nominal Wt.	Compact Section Criteria		Axis X-X				Axis Y-Y				r _{ts}	h _o	Torsional Properties	
	b _t /2t _f	h/t _w	I in. ⁴	S in. ³	r in.	Z in. ³	I in. ⁴	S in. ³	r in.	Z in. ³			J in. ⁶	C _w in. ⁶
67	4.43	11.1	272	60.4	3.72	70.1	88.6	21.4	2.12	32.7	2.43	8.07	5.05	1440
58	5.07	12.4	228	52.0	3.65	59.8	75.1	18.3	2.10	27.9	2.39	7.94	3.33	1180
48	5.92	15.9	184	43.2	3.61	49.0	60.9	15.0	2.08	22.9	2.35	7.82	1.96	931
40	7.21	17.6	146	35.5	3.53	39.8	49.1	12.2	2.04	18.5	2.31	7.69	1.12	726
35	8.10	20.5	127	31.2	3.51	34.7	42.6	10.6	2.03	16.1	2.28	7.63	0.769	619
31	9.19	22.3	110	27.5	3.47	30.4	37.1	9.27	2.02	14.1	2.26	7.57	0.536	530

Example - Analysis of Steel Columns

pass / fail by ASD

Data:

- Column – size, length
- Support conditions
- Material properties – F_y
- Factored Load – P_u

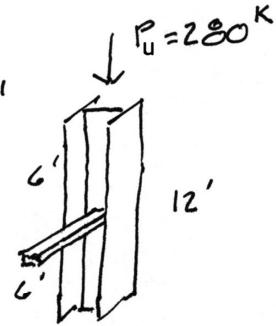
Required:

- $P_u \leq \phi P_n$ (pass)

- Calculate slenderness ratios.
The largest ratio governs.
- Check slenderness ratio against upper limit of 200 (recommended)

DATA :

$$\begin{aligned} W 8 \times 35 & \quad A-36 \\ r_x &= 3.51" \quad F_y = 36 \text{ ksi} \\ r_y &= 2.03" \\ A &= 10.3 \text{ in}^2 \\ l_x &= 12' \quad l_y = 6' \\ K_x &= K_y = 1.0 \end{aligned}$$



X-X AXIS

$$\frac{K_x l_x}{r_x} = \frac{144"}{3.51"}$$

$$\underline{41.03} < 200$$

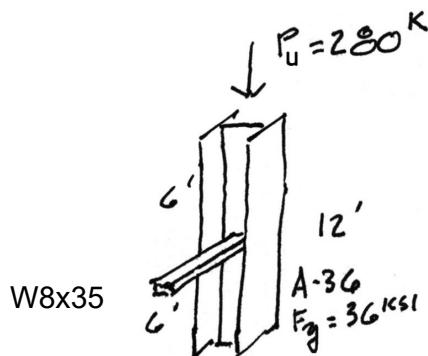
Y-Y AXIS

$$\frac{K_y l_y}{r_y} = \frac{72"}{2.03"}$$

$$35.47$$

Example - Analysis of Steel Columns

pass / fail by ASD



$$4.71 \sqrt{\frac{E}{F_y}} = 4.71 \sqrt{\frac{29000}{36}} = 134$$

$$41 < 134 \therefore \text{SHORT}$$

Euler Equation

$$F_e = \frac{\pi^2 E}{\left(\frac{K L}{r}\right)^2} = \frac{\pi^2 29000 \text{ ksi}}{41^2} = 170.2 \text{ ksi}$$

- Calculate transition slenderness $4.71 \sqrt{E/F_y}$ and determine column type (short or long)

Short Column Equation

$$F_{cr} = \left[0.658^{F_y/F_e} \right] F_y = 0.9153 (36) = 32.95 \text{ ksi}$$

- Calculate F_{cr} based on slenderness

Column Strength

$$P_n = F_{cr} A_g = 32.95 \text{ ksi} \times 10.3 \text{ in}^2 = 339.39 \text{ K}$$

- Determine ϕP_n and compare to P_u

$$\phi P_n = 0.9 P_n = 0.9 (339.39) = 305.4 \text{ K}$$

- If $P_u \leq \phi P_n$, then OK

$$P_u = 280 \text{ K} < 305.4 \text{ K} = \phi P_n \quad \checkmark \text{OK}$$

Analysis of Steel Columns capacity by LRFD

Data:

- Column – size, length
- Support conditions
- Material properties – F_y

Required:

- Max load capacity

1. Calculate slenderness ratios.
The largest ratio governs.
2. Check slenderness ratio against upper limit of 200 (recommended)
3. Calculate transition slenderness $4.71\sqrt{E/F_y}$ and determine column type (short or long)
4. Calculate F_{cr} based on slenderness
5. Determine ϕP_n and Compute allowable capacity:

$$P_n = F_{cr} A_g \quad P_u = \phi P_n$$

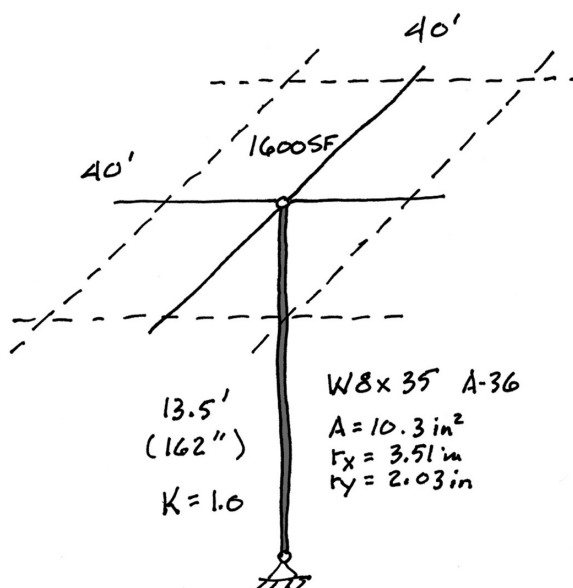
$$F_{cr} = \left[0.658^{\frac{F_y}{F_e}} \right] F_y \quad \text{Short}$$

$$F_{cr} = 0.877 F_e \quad \text{Long}$$



Capacity Example 1

Free standing column
Third floor studio space
Supports roof load = 20 psf DL + SL
snow \approx 15lbs / FT depth



Capacity Example 1

1. Calculate slenderness ratios.
The largest ratio governs.
2. Check slenderness ratio against upper limit of 200 (recommended)
3. Calculate transition slenderness $4.71\sqrt{E/F_y}$ and determine column type (short or long)
4. Calculate F_{cr} based on slenderness

y-y Axis (CONTROLS)

$$\frac{K_y L_y}{r_y} = \frac{1(162'')}{2.03''} = 79.8 < 200 \checkmark$$

$$4.71\sqrt{\frac{E}{F_y}} = 4.71\sqrt{\frac{29000}{36}} = 134$$

$$79.8 < 134 \therefore \text{SHORT}$$

Euler Buckling

$$F_e = \frac{\pi^2 E}{(K L/r)^2} = \frac{\pi^2 29000}{79.8^2} = 44.94 \text{ ksi}$$

Short Column Equation

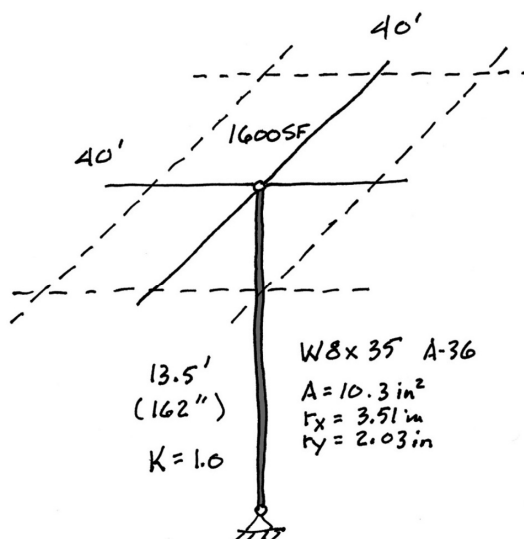
$$F_{cr} = \left[0.658^{\frac{F_y}{F_e}} \right] F_y = \left[0.7151 \right] 36 = 25.74 \text{ ksi}$$

Capacity Example 1

5. Determine ϕP_n and Compute allowable capacity: $P_u = \phi P_n$

DL = 20 psf

20 psf (1600 sf) = 32k on column



Column nominal strength

$$P_n = F_{cr} A_g = 25.74 \text{ ksi} \cdot 10.3 \text{ in}^2 = 265.1 \text{ k}$$

$$\phi P_n = 0.9(265) = 238.6 \text{ k} = P_u$$

Load capacity

$$P_u = 1.2(32) + 1.6(5L) = 238.6 \text{ k}$$

$$5L = 125.1 \text{ k}$$

$$\text{For } A_t = 40 \times 40 = 1600 \text{ SF}$$

$$SL = \frac{125100^*}{1600 \text{ SF}} = 78.2 \text{ psf}$$

$$78.2 \text{ lbs} / 15 \text{ lbs/ft} = 5.21 \text{ ft}$$

Capacity Example 2

long column – using equations

Find the capacity for the
25 ft. column shown.

$$r_x = 3.51 \text{ in.}$$

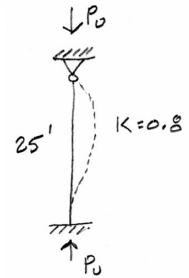
$$r_y = 2.03 \text{ in.}$$

$$W8 \times 35$$

$$F_y = 50 \text{ ksi}$$

$$E = 29,000 \text{ ksi}$$

$$L = 25' \text{ (No Bracing)}$$



Slenderness y-y

$$\frac{KL_y}{r_y} = \frac{0.8(25')}{2.03} = 118.2$$

$$4.71 \sqrt{\frac{E}{F_y}} = 113 < 118.2 \quad \therefore \text{LONG}$$

Euler Buckling

$$F_c = \frac{\pi^2 E}{\left(\frac{KL}{r}\right)^2} = \frac{\pi^2 29,000}{118.2^2} = 20.47 \text{ ksi}$$

Long Column Equation

$$F_{cr} = 0.877(20.47) = 17.95 \text{ ksi}$$

Column strength

$$\phi P_n = \phi F_{cr} A_g = 0.9(17.95)(10.3) = 164.4 \text{ k}$$

Table G1 Buckling Length Coefficients, K_e

Buckling modes						
Theoretical K_e value	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
Recommended design K_e when ideal conditions approximated	0.65	0.80	1.2	1.0	2.10	2.4
End condition code		Rotation fixed, translation fixed				
		Rotation free, translation fixed				
		Rotation fixed, translation free				
		Rotation free, translation free				

Capacity Example 2

long column – using table

$$W8 \times 35$$

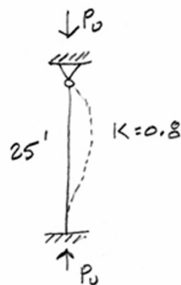
$$F_y = 50 \text{ ksi}$$

$$E = 29,000 \text{ ksi}$$

$$L = 25' \text{ (No Bracing)}$$

r_y CONTROLS

$$KL = 0.8(25') = 20'$$



Shape		W8x													
lb/ft		67		58		48		40		35		31			
Design		P_n/Ω_c		$\phi_c P_n$		P_n/Ω_c		$\phi_c P_n$		P_n/Ω_c		$\phi_c P_n$		P_n/Ω_c	
		ASD	LRFD	ASD	LRFD	ASD	LRFD	ASD	LRFD	ASD	LRFD	ASD	LRFD	ASD	LRFD
Effective length, L_e (ft), with respect to least radius of gyration, r_y	0	590	886	512	769	422	634	350	526	308	463	273	411		
	6	542	815	470	706	387	581	320	481	281	423	249	374		
	7	526	790	455	685	375	563	309	465	272	409	241	362		
	8	508	763	439	660	361	543	298	448	262	394	232	346		
	9	488	733	422	634	347	521	285	429	251	377	222	333		
	10	467	701	403	606	331	497	272	409	239	359	211	317		
	11	444	668	384	576	314	473	258	388	226	340	200	301		
	12	421	633	363	546	297	447	243	366	213	321	189	283		
	13	397	597	342	514	280	421	228	343	200	301	177	266		
	14	373	560	321	482	262	394	213	321	187	281	165	248		
	15	348	523	299	450	244	367	198	298	174	261	153	230		
	16	324	487	278	418	226	340	183	275	160	241	141	212		
	17	300	450	257	386	209	314	169	253	147	221	130	195		
	18	276	415	236	355	192	288	154	232	135	203	118	178		
	19	253	381	216	325	175	264	141	211	123	188	108	162		
	20	231	347	197	296	159	239	127	191	111	166	97.2	146		
	22	191	287	163	244	132	198	105	158	91.5	138	80.3	121		
	24	160	241	137	205	111	166	88.2	133	76.9	116	67.5	101		
	26	137	205	116	175	94.2	142	75.2	113	65.5	98.5	57.5	86.5		
	28	118	177	100	151	81.2	122	64.8	97.4	56.5	84.9	49.6	74.5		
	30	103	154	87.5	131	70.7	106	56.5	84.9	49.2	74.0	43.2	64.9		
	32	90.3	136	76.9	116	62.2	93.5	49.6	74.6	43.3	65.0	38.0	57.1		
	34	79.9	120	68.1	102	55.1	82.8	44.0	66.1						
Properties															
P_{n0} , kips	126	190	102	153	72.0	108	57.2	85.9	45.9	68.9	39.4	59.1			
P_{n1} , kip/in.	19.0	28.5	17.0	25.5	13.3	20.0	12.0	18.0	10.3	15.5	9.50	14.3			
P_{n2} , kips	507	761	363	546	174	262	127	192	81.1	122	63.0	94.7			
P_{n3} , kips	164	246	123	185	87.8	132	68.7	88.2	45.9	68.9	35.4	53.2			
L_p , ft	7.49		7.42		7.35		7.21		7.17		7.18				
L_r , ft	47.6		41.6		35.2		29.9		27.0		24.8				
A_g , in. ²	19.7		17.1		14.1		11.7		10.3		9.13				
I_y , in. ⁴	272		228		184		146		127		110				
I_{yy} , in. ⁴	88.6		75.1		60.9		49.1		42.6		37.1				
r_y , in.	2.12		2.10		2.08		2.04		2.03		2.02				
r_{yy} , in.	1.75		1.74		1.74		1.73		1.78		1.72				
$P_n/L^2 \times 10^4$, k-in. ²	7790		6530		5270		4180		3630		3150				
$P_n/L^2 \times 10^4$, k-in. ²	2540		2150		1740		1410		1220		1060				
ASD		LRFD		Note: Heavy line indicates L_e/r_y equal to or greater than 200.											
$\Omega_c = 1.67$		$\phi_c = 0.90$													