

Attachment M – Excerpt From the Federal Transit Administration Vibration Impact Assessment (2018)

The following is an excerpt from the Federal Transit Administration's 2018 Transit Noise and Vibration Assessment Manual. The FIRM shall use the most recent version of this Manual for their assessment and provide acknowledgement within the report which version was used and the date on which it was verified by the FIRM.

7.2 Construction Vibration Assessment

Construction activity can result in varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the equipment and methods employed. Operation of construction equipment causes ground vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish in strength with distance. Buildings founded on the soil near the construction site respond to these vibrations with varying results, ranging from no perceptible effects at the lowest levels, low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, and slight damage at the highest levels.

While ground vibrations from construction activities do not often reach the levels that can damage structures, fragile buildings must receive special consideration. The construction vibration criteria include consideration of the building condition.

The key elements of the Construction Vibration Assessment procedures and recommended workflow are as follows:

Step 1: Determine level of construction vibration assessment

Step 2: Use a qualitative construction vibration assessment

Step 3: Use a quantitative construction vibration assessment

Step 4: Assess construction vibration impact

Step 5: Determine construction vibration mitigation measures

Step 1: Determine Level of Construction Vibration Assessment

Determine the appropriate level of assessment based on the scale and type of the project and the stage of environmental review.

Ia. Determine if an assessment is required.

Construction Vibration Assessments are not required for many small projects including:

- Installation of safety features like grade-crossing signals
- Track improvements within the ROW
- Erecting small buildings and facilities, which are similar in scale to the surrounding development

Ib. Determine whether a qualitative or quantitative assessment is required.

- **Qualitative Construction Vibration Assessment** – A qualitative construction vibration assessment is appropriate for projects where prolonged annoyance or damage from construction vibration is not expected. For example, equipment that generates little or no ground vibration—such as air compressors, light trucks, and hydraulic loaders—only require qualitative descriptions. See Section 7.2, Step 2 for more information on qualitative construction vibration assessments.
- **Quantitative Construction Vibration Assessment** – A quantitative construction vibration analysis is appropriate for projects where construction vibration may result in building damage or prolonged annoyance. For example, activities such as blasting, pile-driving, vibratory compaction, demolition, and drilling or excavation near sensitive structures require a quantitative analysis. See Section 7.2, Step 3 for more information on quantitative construction vibration assessments.

If there is uncertainty in how to determine the appropriate level of assessment, contact the FTA Regional office.

Step 2: Use a Qualitative Construction Vibration Assessment

Use a qualitative construction vibration assessment to estimate vibration for appropriate projects per Section 7.2, Step 1b.

Provide qualitative descriptions in the environmental document of the following elements:

- Duration of construction (both overall and at specific locations)
- Equipment expected to be used
- Description of how ground-borne vibration will be maintained at an acceptable level

Note that the criteria in Section 7.2, Step 4 do not apply to qualitative assessments.

Step 3: Use a Quantitative Construction Vibration Assessment

Use a quantitative construction vibration assessment to estimate vibration for appropriate projects per Section 7.2, Step 1b.

For quantitative construction vibration assessments, follow the recommended procedure in this step. Vibration source levels from typical construction equipment and operations are provided below, and procedures on how to estimate construction vibration for damage and annoyance are provided in Steps 3a and 3b, respectively.

- **Vibration Source Levels from Construction Equipment** – Table 7-4 presents average source levels in terms of velocity for various types of construction equipment measured under a wide variety of construction activities. The approximate rms vibration velocity levels were calculated from the PPV limits using a crest factor of 4, representing a PPV-rms difference of 12 dB. Note that although the table gives one level for each piece of equipment, there is considerable variation in reported ground vibration levels from construction activities. The data in Table 7-4 provide a reasonable estimate for a wide range of soil conditions.⁽⁶⁶⁾⁽⁶⁷⁾⁽⁶⁸⁾⁽⁶⁹⁾

Table 7-4 Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment

Equipment		PPV at 25 ft, in/sec	Approximate Lv* at 25 ft
Pile Driver (impact)	upper range	1.518	112
	typical	0.644	104
Pile Driver (sonic)	upper range	0.734	105
	typical	0.17	93
Clam shovel drop (slurry wall)		0.202	94
Hydromill (slurry wall)	in soil	0.008	66
	in rock	0.017	75
Vibratory Roller		0.21	94
Hoe Ram		0.089	87
Large bulldozer		0.089	87
Caisson drilling		0.089	87
Loaded trucks		0.076	86
Jackhammer		0.035	79
Small bulldozer		0.003	58

* RMS velocity in decibels, VdB re 1 micro-in/sec

3a. Damage Assessment

Assess for building damage for each piece of equipment individually.

Construction vibration is generally assessed in terms of peak particle velocity (PPV), as described in Section 5.1.

- Determine the vibration source level (PPV_{ref}) for each piece of equipment at a reference distance of 25 ft as described above and in Table 7-4.
- Use Eq. 7-2 to apply the propagation adjustment to the source reference level to account for the distance from the equipment to the receiver. Note that the equation is based on point sources with normal propagation conditions.

$$PPV_{equip} = PPV_{ref} \times \left(\frac{25}{D}\right)^{1.5} \quad \text{Eq. 7-2}$$

where:

PPV_{equip} = the peak particle velocity of the equipment adjusted for distance, in/sec
 PPV_{ref} = the source reference vibration level at 25 ft, in/sec
 D = distance from the equipment to the receiver, ft

3b. Annoyance Assessment

Assess for annoyance for each piece of equipment individually. Ground-borne vibration related to human annoyance is related to rms velocity levels, expressed in VdB as described in Section 5.1.

Estimate the vibration level (L_v) using Eq. 7-3.

$$L_{v,distance} = L_{vref} - 30 \log\left(\frac{D}{25}\right) \quad \text{Eq. 7-3}$$

where:

$L_{v,distance}$ = the rms velocity level adjusted for distance, VdB
 L_{vref} = the source reference vibration level at 25 ft, VdB
 D = distance from the equipment to the receiver, ft

Step 4: Assess Construction Vibration Impact

Compare the predicted vibration levels from the Quantitative Construction Vibration Assessment with impact criteria to assess impact from construction vibration.

Assess potential damage effects from construction vibration for each piece of equipment individually. Note that equipment operating at the same time could increase vibration levels substantially, but predicting any increase could be difficult. The criteria presented in this section should be used during the environmental impact assessment phase to identify problem locations that must be addressed during the engineering phase.

Compare the PPV and approximate L_v for each piece of equipment determined in Section 7.2, Step 3 to the vibration damage criteria in Table 7-5, which is presented by building/structural category, to assess impact.⁽⁷⁰⁾⁽⁷¹⁾ The approximate rms vibration velocity levels were calculated from the PPV limits using a crest factor of 4.

Table 7-5 Construction Vibration Damage Criteria

Building/ Structural Category	PPV, in/sec	Approximate L_v *
I. Reinforced-concrete, steel or timber (no plaster)	0.5	102
II. Engineered concrete and masonry (no plaster)	0.3	98
III. Non-engineered timber and masonry buildings	0.2	94
IV. Buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage	0.12	90

*RMS velocity in decibels, VdB re 1 micro-in/sec

Compare the L_v determined in Section 7.2, Step 3 to the criteria for the General Vibration Assessment in Section 6.2 to assess annoyance or interference with vibration-sensitive activities due to construction vibration.