



American Railway Engineering and  
Maintenance-of-Way Association

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# CHAPTER 15

## STEEL STRUCTURES<sup>1</sup>

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### FOREWORD

Part 1 through Part 4, Part 6, and Part 7 formulate specific and detailed recommendations for the design, fabrication, erection, maintenance, inspection, and rating of steel railway bridges for:

- Spans up to 400 feet,
- Standard gage track,
- Normal North American passenger and freight equipment, and
- Speeds of freight trains up to 80 mph and passenger trains up to 90 mph.

The requirements, however, apply to spans of any length, but special provisions for spans longer than 400 feet should be added by the company as may be required. Part 5, *Bearing Design and Construction*, formulates specific and detailed recommendations for the design and construction of bearings for nonmovable railway bridges. Recommendations for the design and construction of special bearings for movable railway bridges are included in Part 6, *Movable Bridges*. Part 8 covers miscellaneous items. Part 9 is a commentary, including references, for explanation of various articles in the other parts.

This chapter is presented as a consensus document by a committee composed of railroad engineers, engineers in private practice, engineers involved in research and teaching, and other industry professionals having substantial and broad-based experience designing, evaluating, and investigating steel structures used by railroads. The recommendations contained herein are based upon past successful usage, advances in the state of knowledge, and changes in design and maintenance practices. These recommendations have been developed and are intended for routine use and may not provide sufficient criteria for infrequently encountered conditions. Therefore, professional judgment must be exercised when applying the recommendations of this chapter as part of an overall solution to any particular issue.

In general, this chapter is revised and published anew on an annual basis. The latest published edition of the chapter should be used, regardless of the age of an existing structure. For purposes of determining historical recommendations under which an existing structure may have been built and maintained, it can prove useful to examine previously published editions of the chapter. However, when historical recommendations differ from the recommendations contained in the latest published edition of the chapter, the recommendations of the latest published edition of the chapter shall govern.

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<sup>1</sup> The material in this and other chapters in the AREMA *Manual for Railway Engineering* is published as recommended practice to railroads and others concerned with the engineering, design and construction of railroad fixed properties (except signals and communications), and allied services and facilities (Reference 19). For the purpose of this Manual, RECOMMENDED PRACTICE is defined as a material, device, design, plan, specification, principle or practice recommended to the railways for use as required, either exactly as presented or with such modifications as may be necessary or desirable to meet the needs of individual railways, but in either event, with a view to promoting efficiency and economy in the location, construction, operation or maintenance of railways. It is not intended to imply that other practices may not be equally acceptable.

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Grateful acknowledgment is hereby made to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the American Welding Society for having made available their Bridge Welding Code (AWS D1.5) for use by reference in these recommended practices. In applying AWS D1.5, the term “allowable stresses” is to be construed as those allowed herein. Certain other modifications and exceptions to the Code are also recommended.

Grateful acknowledgement is also made to the Society of Protective Coating (SSPC) for use of their publications by reference in the recommendations cited in [Part 8, Section 8.7](#), regarding the cleaning and painting of existing steel railway bridges.

Part 2, Design – High Strength Steels was combined with [Part 1, Design](#) in 1993.

Part 5, Special Types of Construction was combined with [Part 1, Design](#) in 2008.

Part 10, Bearing Design, and Part 11, Bearing Construction, were combined into a new [Part 5, Bearing Design and Construction](#) in 2013.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Chapters of the AREMA Manual are divided into numbered Parts, each comprised of related documents (specifications, recommended practices, plans, etc.). Individual Parts are divided into Sections by centered headings set in capital letters and identified by a Section number. These Sections are subdivided into Articles designated by numbered side headings.

**Page Numbers** – In the page numbering of the Manual (15-3-1, for example) the first numeral designates the Chapter number, the second denotes the Part number in the Chapter, and the third numeral designates the page number in the Part. Thus, 15-3-1 means Chapter 15, Part 3, page 1.

In the Glossary and References, the Part number is replaced by either a “G” for Glossary or “R” for References.

**Document Dates** – The bold type date (Document Date) at the beginning of each document (Part) applies to the document as a whole and designates the year in which revisions were last published somewhere in the document, unless an attached footnote indicates that the document was adopted, reapproved, or rewritten in that year.

**Article Dates** – Each Article shows the date (in parenthesis) of the last publication of revisions to that Article.

**Reaffirmed Dates** - Each Article is being reviewed and reaffirmed every 6 years beginning with the year 2002. If no technical changes are made, the publication date of the last reaffirmation is shown following the title of the Article and the Article Date.

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