

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF EXPLOSIVES ENGINEERS BLAST VIBRATIONS AND SEISMOGRAPH SECTION

ISEE Field Practice Guidelines for Blasting Seismographs

Disclaimer: These field practice recommendations are intended to serve as general guidelines, and cannot describe all types of field conditions. It is incumbent on the operator to evaluate these conditions and to obtain good coupling between monitoring instrument and the surface to be monitored. In all cases, the operator should describe the field conditions and setup procedures in the permanent record of each blast.

Preface: Seismographs are used to establish compliance with regulations and evaluate explosive performance. Laws and regulations have been established to prevent damage to property and injury to people. The disposition of the rules is strongly dependant on the reliability and accuracy of ground vibration and airblast data. In terms of explosive performance the same holds true. One goal of the ISEE Blast Vibrations and Seismograph Section is to ensure reliable and consistent recording of ground vibrations and air blasts between all blasting seismographs.

Part I. General Guidelines

Seismographs are deployed in the field to record the levels of blast-induced ground vibration and airblast. Accuracy of the recordings is essential. These guidelines define the user's responsibilities when deploying seismographs in the field.

1. Read the instruction manual. Every seismograph comes with an instruction manual. Users are responsible for reading the appropriate sections before monitoring a blast.
2. Seismograph calibration. Annual calibration of the seismograph is recommended.
3. Keep proper records. A seismograph user's log should note: the user's name, date, time, place and other pertinent data.
4. Record the blast. When seismographs are deployed in the field, the time spent deploying the unit justifies recording an event. As practical, set the trigger levels low enough to record each blast.
5. Record the full waveform. It is not recommended that the continuous recording option available on many seismographs be used for monitoring blast generated vibrations.
6. Document the location of the seismograph. This includes the name of the structure and where the seismograph was placed on the property relative to the structure. Any person should be able to locate and identify the exact monitoring location at a future date.
7. Know and record the distance to the blast. The horizontal distance from the seismograph to the blast should be known to at least two significant digits. For example, a blast within 1000 feet would be measured to the nearest tens of feet and a blast within 10,000 feet would be measured to the nearest hundreds of feet. Where elevation changes exceed 2.5h:1v, slant distances or true distance should be used.
8. Know the data processing time of the seismograph. Some units take up to 5 minutes to process and print data. If another blast occurs within this time the second blast may be missed.
9. Know the memory or record capacity of the seismograph. Enough memory must be available to store the event. The full waveform should be saved for future reference in either digital or analog form.

10. Know the nature of the report that is required. For example, provide a hard copy in the field, keep digital data as a permanent record or both. If an event is to be printed in the field, a printer with paper is needed.
11. Allow ample time for proper setup of the seismograph. Many errors occur when seismographs are hurriedly set-up. Generally, more than 15 minutes for set-up should be allowed from the time the user arrives at the monitoring location until the blast.
12. Know the temperature. Seismograph have varying manufacturer specified operating temperatures.
13. Secure cables. Suspended or freely moving cables from the wind or other extraneous sources, can produce false triggers due to microphonics.

Part II. Ground Vibration Monitoring

Placement and coupling of the vibration sensor are the two most important factors to ensure accurate ground vibration recordings.

A. Sensor Placement

The sensor should be placed on or in the ground on the side of the structure towards the blast. A structure can be a house, pipeline, telephone pole, etc. Measurements on driveways, walkways, and slabs are to be avoided where possible.

1. Location relative to the structure. Sensor placement should ensure that the data obtained adequately represents the vibration levels received at the structure being protected. The sensor should be placed within 10 feet of the structure or less than 10% of the distance from the blast, whichever is less .
2. Soil density evaluation. The soil density should be greater than or equal to the sensor density. Fill material, sand, unconsolidated soils, flower-bed mulch or other unusual mediums may have an influence on the recording accuracy if not properly dealt with during geophone installation.
3. The sensor must be nearly level.
4. The longitudinal channel should be pointing directly at the blast and the bearing should be recorded.
5. Where access to the structure and/or property is not available, the sensor should be placed closer to the blast in undisturbed soil.

B. Sensor coupling

If the acceleration exceeds 0.2 g, slippage of the sensor may be a problem. Depending on the anticipated acceleration levels spiking, burial, or sandbagging of the geophone to the ground may be appropriate.

1. If the acceleration is expected to be:
 - a. less than 0.2 g, no burial or attachment is necessary
 - b. between 0.2 and 1.0 g, burial or attachment is preferred. Spiking may be acceptable.
 - c. greater than 1.0 g, burial or firm attachment is required (USBM RI 8506).

The following table exemplifies the particle velocities and frequencies where accelerations are 0.2 g and 1.0 g.

Frequency, Hz	4	10	15	20	25	30	40	50	100	200
Particle Velocity - in/s at 0.2 g	3.07	1.23	0.82	0.61	0.49	0.41	0.31	0.25	0.12	0.06
Particle Velocity - in/s at 1.0 g	15.4	6.15	4.10	3.05	2.45	2.05	1.55	1.25	0.60	0.30

2. Burial or attachment methods.

a. The preferred burial method is excavating a hole that is no less than three times the height of the sensor (ANSI S2.47-1990, R1997), spiking the sensor to the bottom of the hole, and firmly compacting soil around and over the sensor.

b. Attachment to bedrock is achieved by bolting, clamping or glueing the sensor to the rock surface.

c. The sensor may be attached to the foundation of the structure if it is located within +/- 1-foot of ground level (USBM RI 8969). This should only be used if burial, spiking or sandbagging is not practical.

3. Other sensor placement methods.

a. Shallow burial is anything less than described at 2a above.

b. Spiking entails removing the sod, with minimal disturbance of the soil and firmly pressing the sensor with the attached spike(s) into the ground.

c. Sand bagging requires removing the sod with minimal disturbance to the soil and placing the sensor on the bare spot with a sand bag over top. Sand bags should be large and loosely filled with about 10 pounds of sand. When placed over the sensor the sandbag profile should be as low and wide as possible with a maximum amount of firm contact with the ground.

d. A combination of both spiking and sandbagging gives even greater assurance that good coupling is obtained.

C. Programing considerations

Site conditions dictate certain actions when programing the seismograph.

1. Ground vibration trigger level. The trigger level should be programmed low enough to trigger the unit from blast vibrations and high enough to minimize the occurrence of false events. The level should be slightly above the expected background vibrations for the area. A good starting level is 0.05 in/s.

2. Dynamic range and resolution. If the seismograph is not equipped with an auto-range function, the user should estimate the expected vibration level and set the appropriate range. The resolution of the printed waveform should allow verification of whether or not the event was a blast.

3. Recording duration - Set the record time for 2 seconds longer than the blast duration plus 1 second for each 1100 feet from the blast.

Part III Airblast Monitoring

Placement of the microphone relative to the structure is the most important factor.

A. Microphone placement

The microphone should be placed along the side of the structure nearest the blast.

1. The microphone should be mounted near the geophone with the manufacturer's wind screen attached.
2. The preferred microphone height is 3 feet above the ground or within 1.2 inches of the ground. Other heights may be acceptable for practical reasons. (ANSI S12.18-1994, ANSI S12.9-1992/Part2) (USBM RI 8508)
3. If practical, the microphone should not be shielded from the blast by nearby buildings, vehicles or other large barriers. If such shielding cannot be avoided, the horizontal distance between the microphone and shielding object should be greater than the height of the shielding object above the microphone.
4. If placed too close to a structure, the airblast may reflect from the house surface and record higher amplitudes. Structure response noise may also be recorded. Reflection can be minimized by placing the microphone near a corner of the structure. (RI 8508)

B. Programing considerations

Site conditions dictate certain actions when programing the seismograph to record airblast.

1. Trigger level. When only an airblast measurement is desired, the trigger level should be low enough to trigger the unit from the airblast and high enough to minimize the occurrence of false events. The level should be slightly above the expected background noise for the area. A good starting level is 120 dB.
2. Recording duration. When only recording airblast, set the recording time for at least 2 seconds more than the blast duration. When ground vibrations and airblast measurements are desired on the same record, follow the guidelines for ground vibration programing (Part II C.3).

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