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Shock and Vibration Environments Encountered During Normal Rail Transportation of Heavy Cargo

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Clifford F. Magnuson

Prepared by
Sandia National Laboratories
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87185 and Livermore, California 94550
for the United States Department of Energy
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Shock and Vibration Environments Encountered During Normal Rail Transportation of Heavy Cargo

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Abstract

This study was conducted to obtain vibration and superimposed shock data during normal rail shipment of heavy cargo. The data were obtained during a regularly scheduled rail shipment of a 45-tonne (50-ton) cargo which consisted of an empty spent-fuel container, its supporting structure, and associated hoisting devices. The shipment was made over rail lines which are operated by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Company between Denver, Colorado and Albuquerque, New Mexico. The instrumented rail car was equipped with 0.38-m (15-in.) hydraulic end-of-car coupling devices. The 99 percentile levels of vibration acceleration amplitudes and single degree-of-freedom superimposed shock response spectra for the longitudinal, transverse, and vertical axes are presented.

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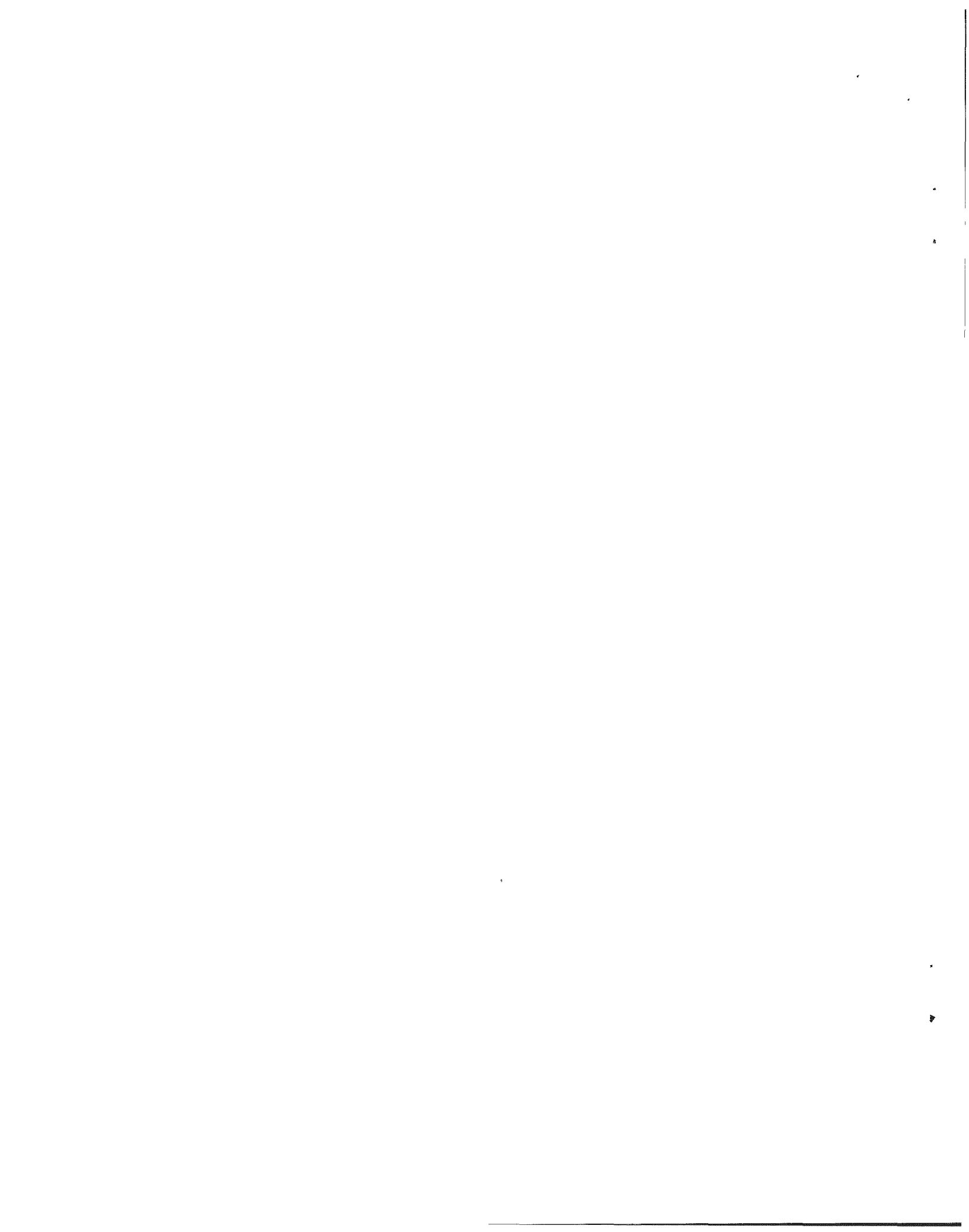
In addition to M. B. Gens and R. C. Rentzsch, SNL, who participated in the instrumentation and data gathering, my thanks to the following persons who participated in and/or supported this project: W. N. Spears, J. W. Donalson, and R. Smith, AT&SF, Albuquerque, NM, and W. Purchase, DOE/ALO for their efforts during the planning and scheduling. W. H. Clark, Applied Research Assistant Manager, AT&SF, Topeka, KS; F. L. Sparks, Road Foreman, AT&SF, Pueblo, CO; S. L. Fruin, Road Foreman, AT&SF, La Junta, CO; H. G. Powers, Trainmaster, AT&SF, Raton, NM; and the engineers on the trains involved in the test for their assistance during the data gathering operation. R. W. Cecil and J. Lewis, Stearns-Roger, Denver, CO, for their cooperation during the loading of the test rail car and the installation of the instrumentation.

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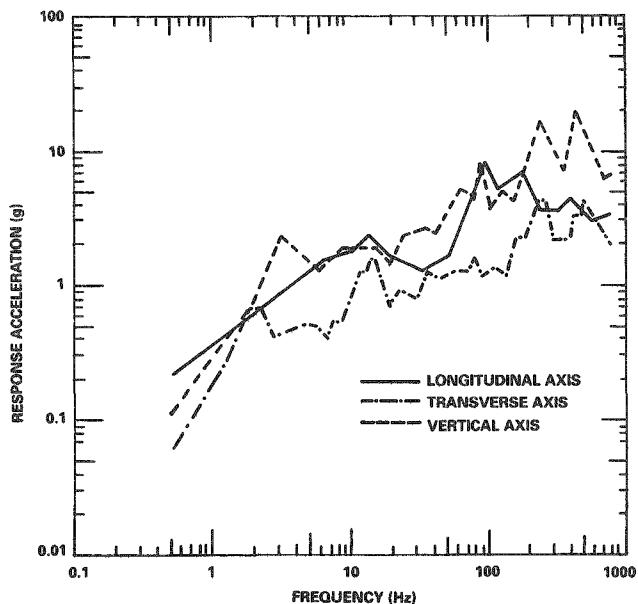
Summary

Shock and vibration environments were measured during rail transport of a 45-tonne (50-ton) cargo mounted on a railroad flat car. The cargo was transported by regular railroad methods from Denver, Colorado to Albuquerque, New Mexico.

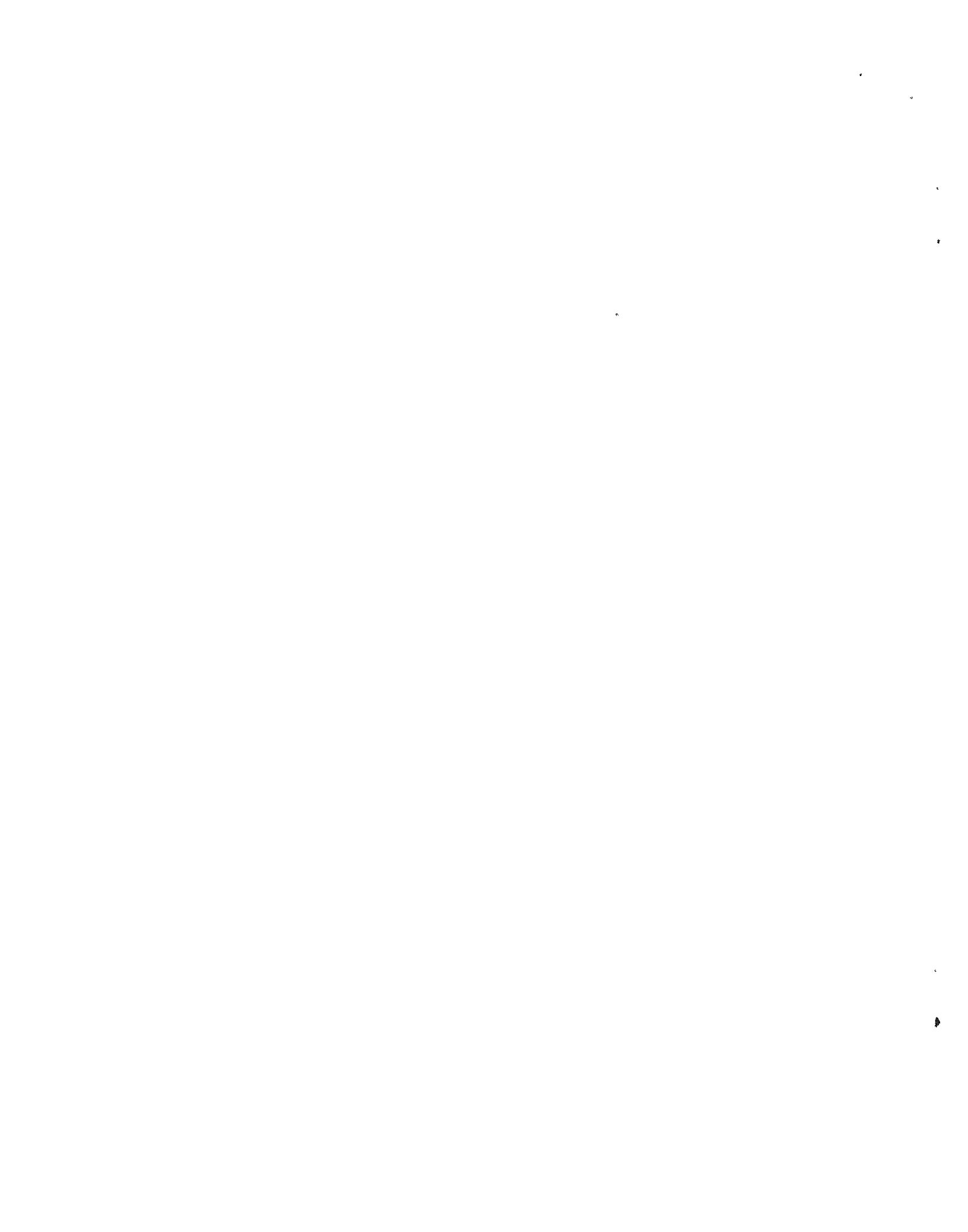
The maxima of the 99 percentile levels of acceleration amplitude vibration for a 45-tonne (50-ton) cargo over the frequency range of 0 to 750 Hz were

Axis	Zero-to-Peak Acceleration (g)
Longitudinal	0.10
Transverse	0.19
Vertical	0.52

The shock response spectra, using 3% damping, are shown in the following figure.



Mean Plus Three Standard Deviation Amplitude Envelopes of Shock Response Spectra; 3% Damping



Shock and Vibration Environments Encountered During Normal Rail Transportation of Heavy Cargo

Introduction

The packaging and transportation of fissile radioactive materials are regulated by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) by means of Federal Regulations Title 10, Part 71. Appendix A of these regulations specifies that the environmental conditions of transport be applied to determine their effects on packages of radioactive material. However, the appendix does not quantify the frequencies or amplitudes of vibration and shock environments, nor does it give their expected occurrence rate as a function of shipment time and/or mileage. As a result, when evaluating a package for licensing application, assumptions regarding the intensities of these environments must be made by each applicant.

Shock and vibration data were available for rail transport of 14 tonne (15 ton) cargo. Spent fuel shipping containers often weigh more than this, so data needed to be obtained during rail transport of heavier cargo. The investigation described in this report results in descriptions of shock and vibration for cargo weighing 45 tonnes (50 tons).

All data described in this report were taken in English units. The metric (SI) values presented result from rounding the English units to the nearest SI units.

Prior Studies

Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) has conducted other investigations to gather and evaluate data on the shock and vibration environments normally encountered during transport of heavy shipping containers by both rail and truck. These investigations were conducted under contract to the NRC.

Efforts in these areas to date have consisted of the following activities:

- Transportation shock and vibration data available up to 1975 in the Department of Energy

(DOE)/Department of Defense (DoD) and the DOE transportation data banks were reviewed and are reported in Reference 1. Predictions of the influence of heavier cargo on these environments as well as predictions of the influence of shock-attenuating couplers on rail cars also were reported in Reference 1. These predictions were based on analytical studies.

Truck data were based on cargo weights which varied from no-load to 14 tonnes (15 tons). Over-the-road rail data were based on a cargo weight of 14 tonnes (15 tons). Rail coupling-shock data were based on cargo weighing approximately 5 tonnes (5 tons).

- Data were gathered during truck transport of two spent-fuel shipping containers. One weighed 20 tonnes (22 tons) and the other weighed 25 tonnes (28 tons). These containers were transported over existing highways between Mercury, Nevada and Albuquerque, New Mexico. The definitions of the shock and vibration environments measured during these events were reported in References 2 and 3. Comparisons of the three sets of truck data are presented in Reference 3.
- Data were gathered during rail-coupling test operations conducted at the Savannah River Plant with cargo weighing 36 tonnes (40 tons) and 64 tonnes (70 tons). The impacting end of each instrumented rail car was equipped with a standard draft gear, a 0.38-m (15-in.) hydraulic end-of-car device, and a 0.51-m (20-in.) sliding center-sill cushion underframe. Impact velocity during these tests ranged from 4.44 km/hr (2.76 mph) to 17.98 km/hr (11.17 mph). The data resulting from these tests are reported in Reference 4.

Test Description

The test described in this report was conducted to obtain vibration and shock data which were superimposed on vibration data during regular rail shipment of cargo that was heavier than 14 tonnes (15 tons).

Test Procedure

This test was conducted during a regularly scheduled rail shipment of 45-tonne (50-ton) cargo over rail lines between Denver, Colorado and Albuquerque,

New Mexico. These lines are operated by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railway Company. The cargo consisted of an empty spent-fuel shipping container and skid along with the necessary hoisting devices. The cargo and rail car are shown in Figure 1 before a protective cover was placed over the spent-fuel container. An additional caboose was provided by AT&SF for SNL and AT&SF personnel who were involved in the test. This caboose was always adjacent to and immediately behind the instrumented rail car and immediately in front of the caboose which was occupied by the train crew at the rear of the train. The trains involved in the tests were those regularly operated by AT&SF for freight service.

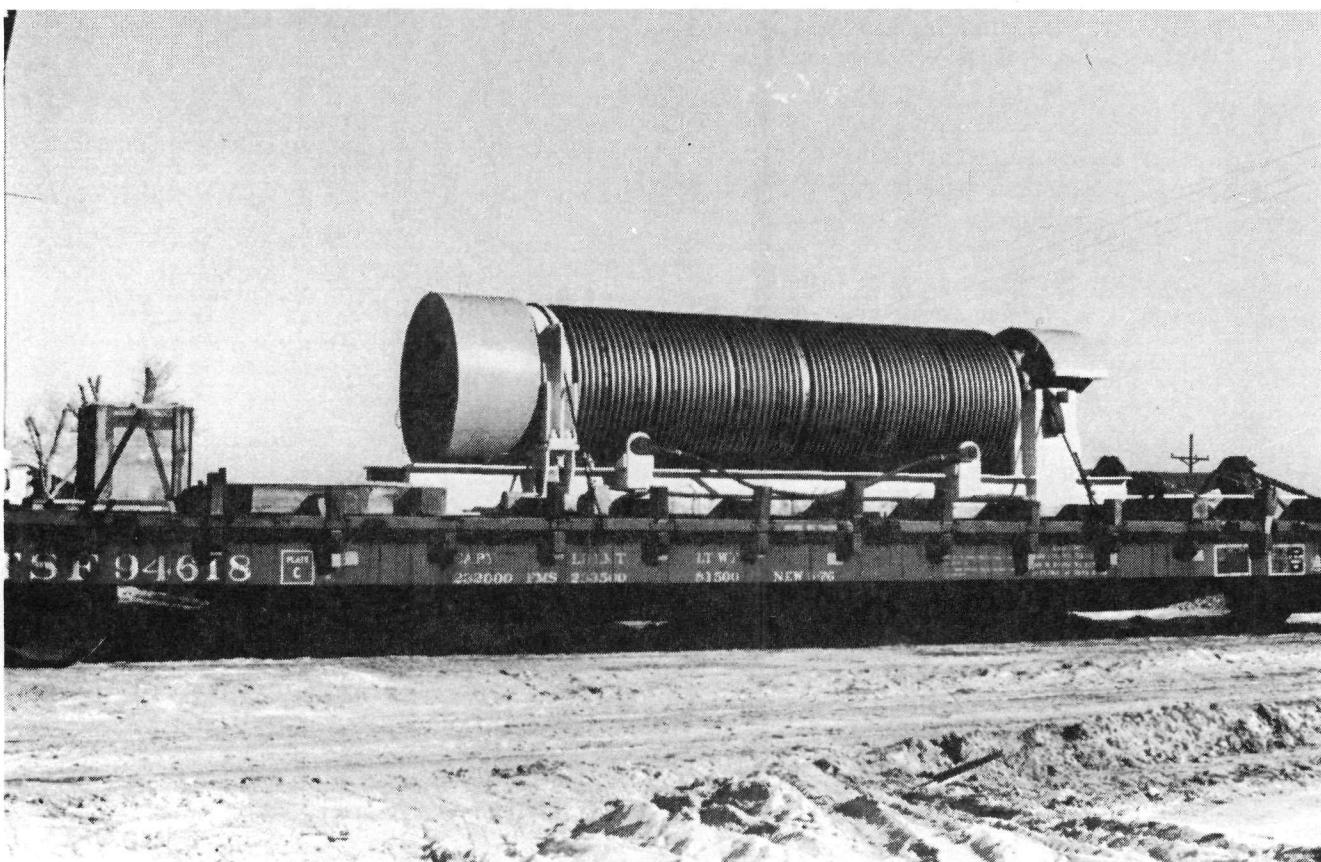


Figure 1. Rail Car and Cargo Before Protective Cover in Place

Train Configuration

Three separate trains were used during this test. The AT&SF 495 Extra South was used between Denver, Colorado and Pueblo, Colorado; it consisted of 43 cars having a total weight of 2603 tonnes (2869 tons) and was pulled by two diesel locomotives.

AT&SF 403 was used between Pueblo, Colorado and La Junta, Colorado; it consisted of 26 loaded rail cars and 27 empty rail cars. The total weight of Train 403 was 3397 tonnes (3744 tons). It was pulled by two diesel locomotives. There were two additional locomotives in the train that were not used for power; they were immediately behind the powered locomotives.

AT&SF 408 was used between La Junta, Colorado and Albuquerque, New Mexico; it consisted of 27 loaded rail cars and 19 empty rail cars from La Junta, Colorado to Trinidad, Colorado. The total weight of this train was 3154 tonnes (3477 tons). Nine additional loaded cars were attached at Trinidad, Colorado; the total weight of the train from Trinidad, Colorado to Albuquerque, New Mexico was 4173 tonnes (4600 tons). Train 408 was configured for mountainous terrain in that six locomotives were used. Four of the six locomotives were on the front of the train and were followed by loaded rail cars except for the instrumented rail car. The loaded rail cars were followed by two

diesel locomotives controlled remotely by the engineer in the lead locomotive. The remote locomotives were followed by the 19 empty rail cars, the instrumented rail car, and the 2 cabooses.

Instrumented Rail Car

The rail car on which cargo and instrumentation were loaded was AT&SF Flat Car 94618. The car was manufactured by Thrall. It was 21 m (68 ft) long, weighed 37 tonnes (41 tons), and had a normal capacity of 105 tonnes (116 tons) and a maximum capacity of 106 tonnes (117 tons). It was equipped with trucks having two axles each and had wheels which were 1 m (38 in.) in diameter. The couplers were equipped with 0.38-m (15-in.) hydraulic end-of-car devices. The cargo floor was wood. The A-end of the car was forward during the entire shipment.

Cargo Tiedowns

The spent-fuel shipping container was tied to the instrumented rail car by two cables. Longitudinal and transverse motion was prevented by wood blocking (Figure 2).

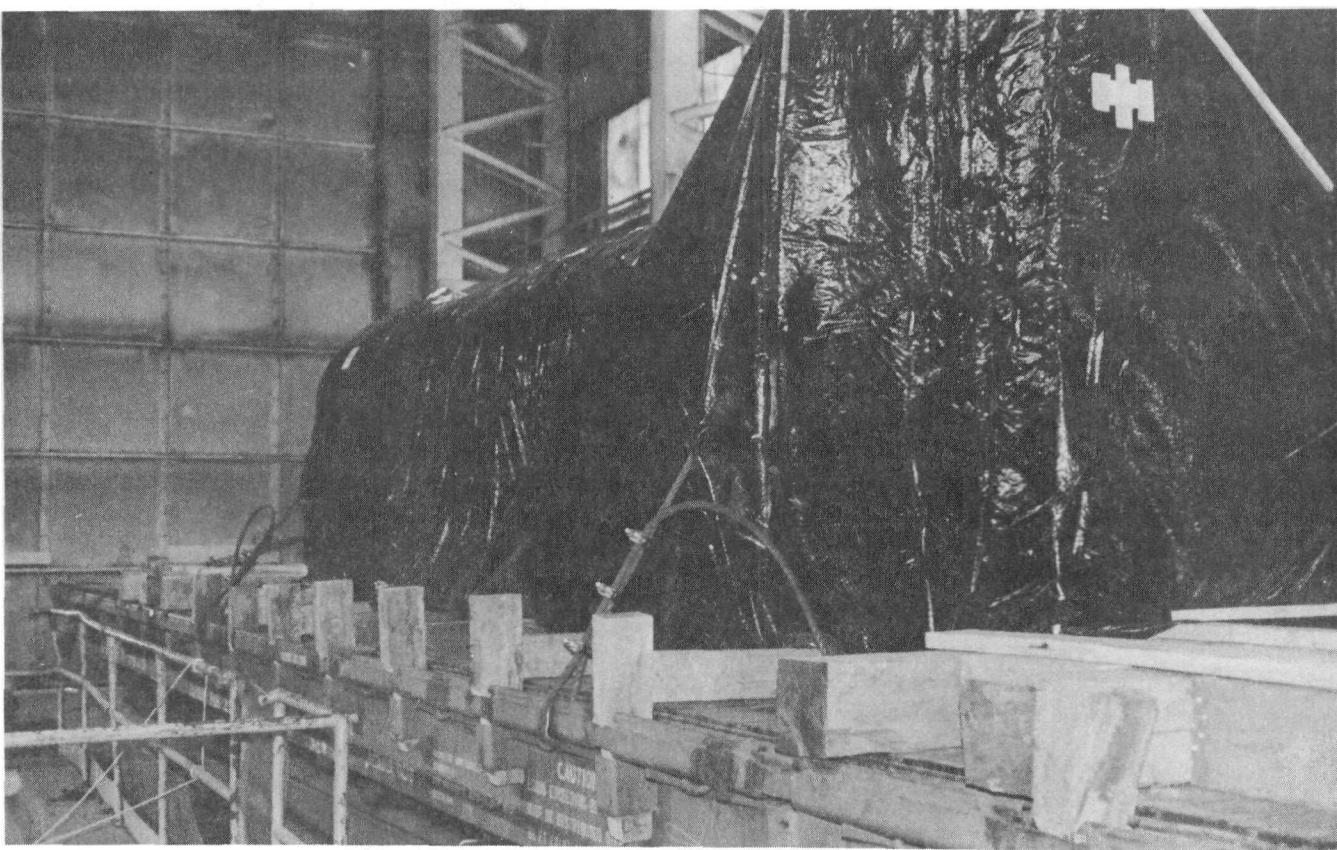


Figure 2. Cargo Tiedown and Blocking; Protective Cover in Place

Data Acquisition

Data measurements were obtained on a sampling basis. The data acquisition system was started and stopped remotely by SNL personnel in the caboose immediately to the rear of the instrumented rail car when the desired sampling locations were encountered. Sampling locations had been preselected by SNL personnel based on detailed track charts provided by AT&SF. Some of the sampling locations were changed during the test because of suggestions made by the AT&SF operational personnel who were participating in the test and were in the caboose with SNL personnel. AT&SF personnel had been briefed on the types of events to be sampled [coupler slack take-up (run-in or buff and run-out or draft), switches, road crossings, climbs, descents, flat track, undulating track, and rough track], and with their knowledge of local track conditions and how trains react to terrain variations, they were able to provide suggestions as to where such data samples could be obtained.

Train speeds were obtained from the train engineers while data samples were being taken.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation consisted of accelerometers with their associated cabling and a data acquisition system which was designed and fabricated at SNL.⁵ The data acquisition system contained the necessary signal conditioning equipment and a tape recorder to provide an analog record of the output from the accelerometers. The system was started and stopped remotely by radio link, so that data sampling was controlled by SNL personnel who were riding in the caboose immediately behind the instrumented rail car.

Fourteen data channels were available on the data acquisition system. One channel was used to record IRIG time being generated by the system. By synchronizing a digital watch with the time generator, specific segments on the data tape were identified with specific events for data reduction purposes by recording the IRIG time and the event conditions during each event

on event identification sheets. One channel was used as a noise-identification channel. Twelve channels were used to record the excitations being experienced by the accelerometers.

Eleven piezoresistive accelerometers having a frequency capability of 0 to 750 Hz and one piezoelectric accelerometer with a frequency capability of 3 to 2500 Hz were mounted on the rail car structure to measure the input from the rail car to the cargo. All of the accelerometers were mounted onto drilled and tapped 1-in. aluminum cubes. The cubes were attached to the rail car structure by dental cement. This method of mounting the accelerometers did not require any drilling and tapping of the rail-car structure. The resonant frequency of this mounting method is approximately 4000 Hz, which is well above the highest frequency of the instrumentation used.

Three piezoresistive accelerometers were mounted over the trucks on the forward end of the rail car to measure the excitations in the longitudinal (forward and aft), transverse (left and right), and vertical axes (Figure 3). Three piezoresistive accelerometers oriented to measure excitations in the longitudinal, transverse, and vertical axes were mounted on the lower flange of a longitudinal structural member (Figure 4) near the middle of the rail car.

Five piezoresistive and one piezoelectric accelerometer along with an inert accelerometer for noise detection were mounted over the trucks on the aft end of the rail car. These accelerometers and the data acquisition system are shown in Figure 5. Three of the five piezoresistive accelerometers mounted over the rear trucks were oriented to measure excitations in the longitudinal, transverse, and vertical axes. Two of the piezoresistive accelerometers at the rear position were oriented to measure excitations in the longitudinal and vertical axes. These two accelerometers were calibrated at higher amplitude levels than the others to provide data if the others overrang during an event. The piezoelectric accelerometer was mounted to measure excitations in the vertical axis. This accelerometer was included in the instrumentation to provide an indication of any significant excitation above the 750-Hz capability of the piezoresistive accelerometers.

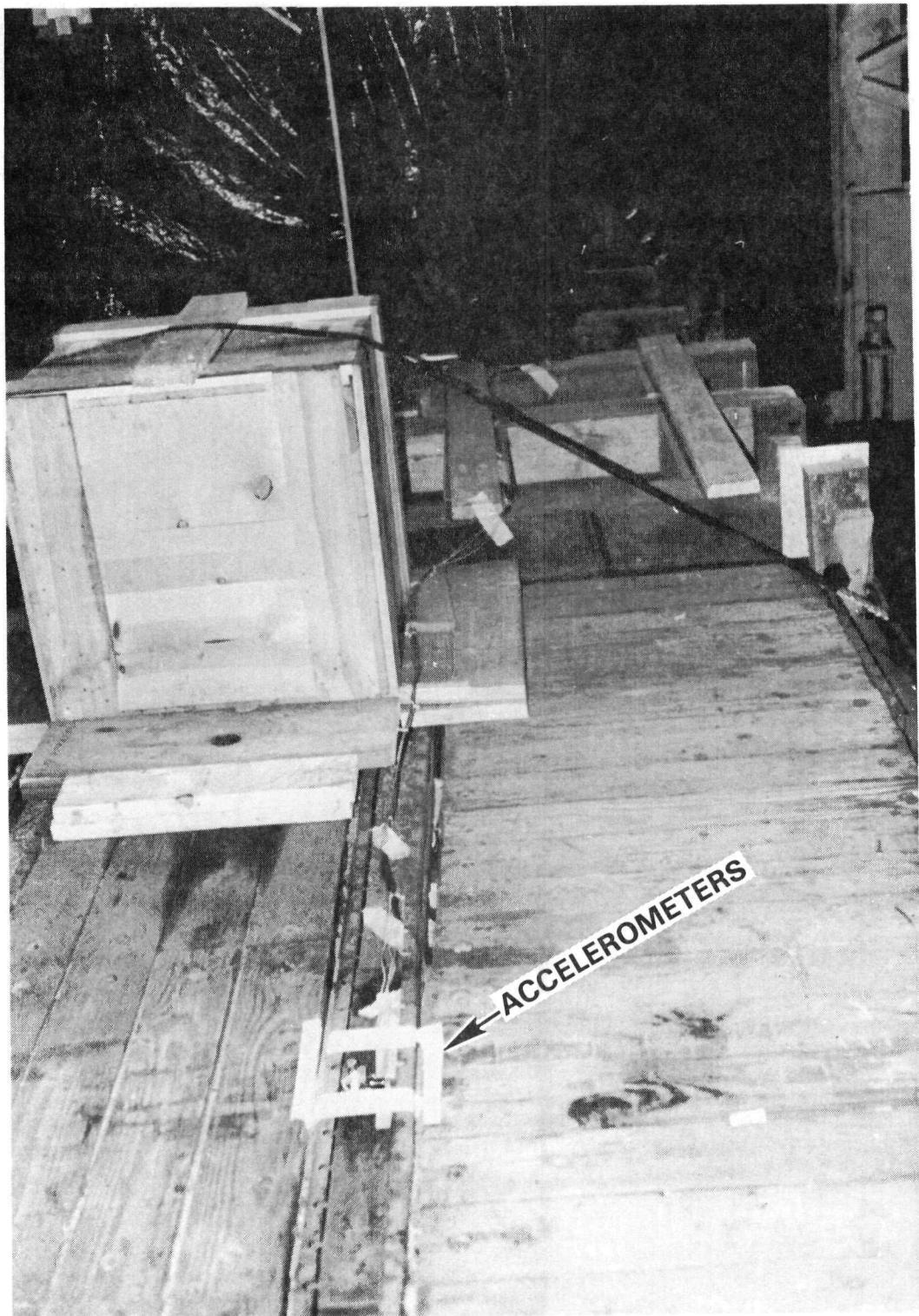


Figure 3. Accelerometer Mounting Over Forward Bolster

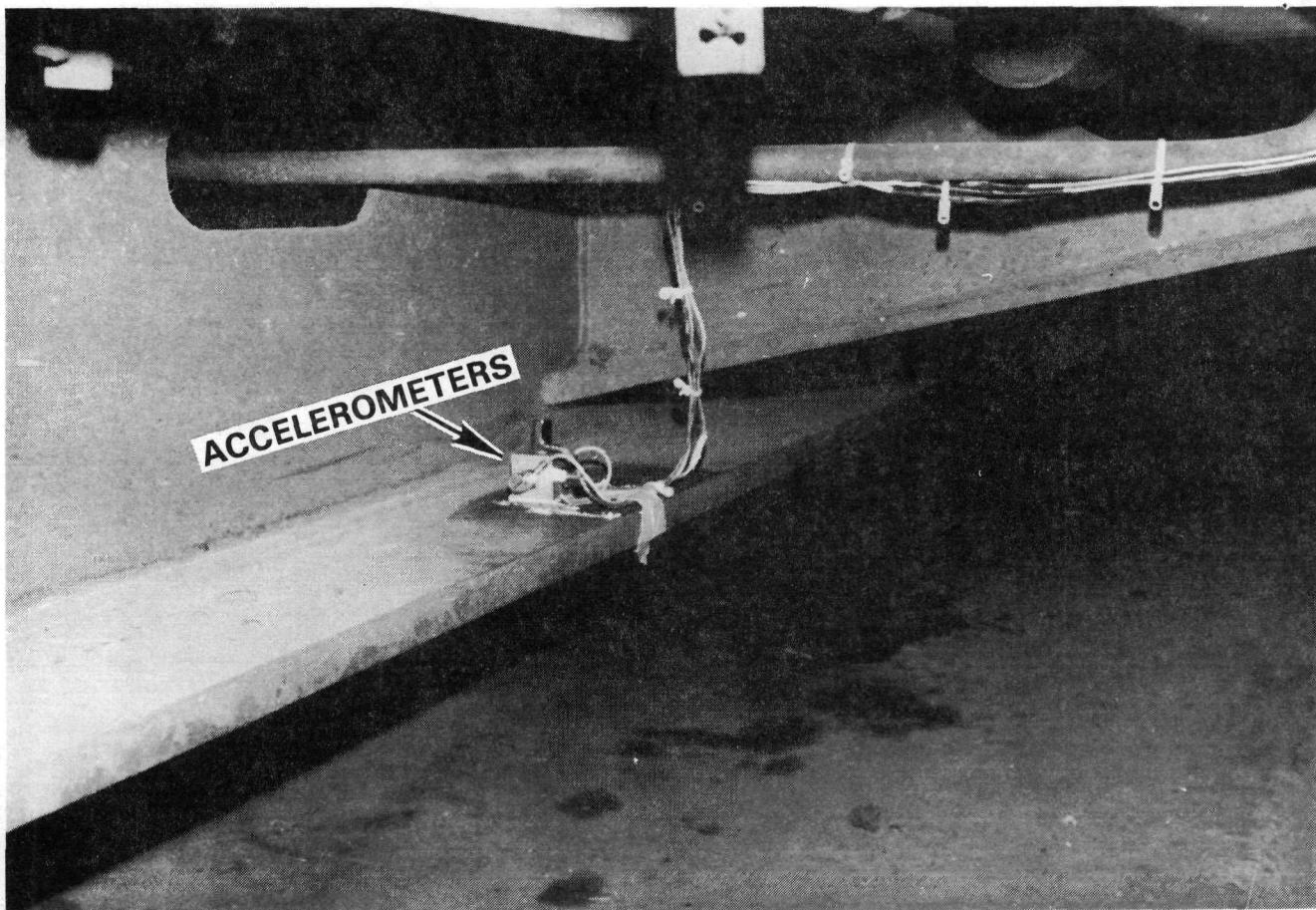


Figure 4. Accelerometer Mounting at Middle of Rail Car

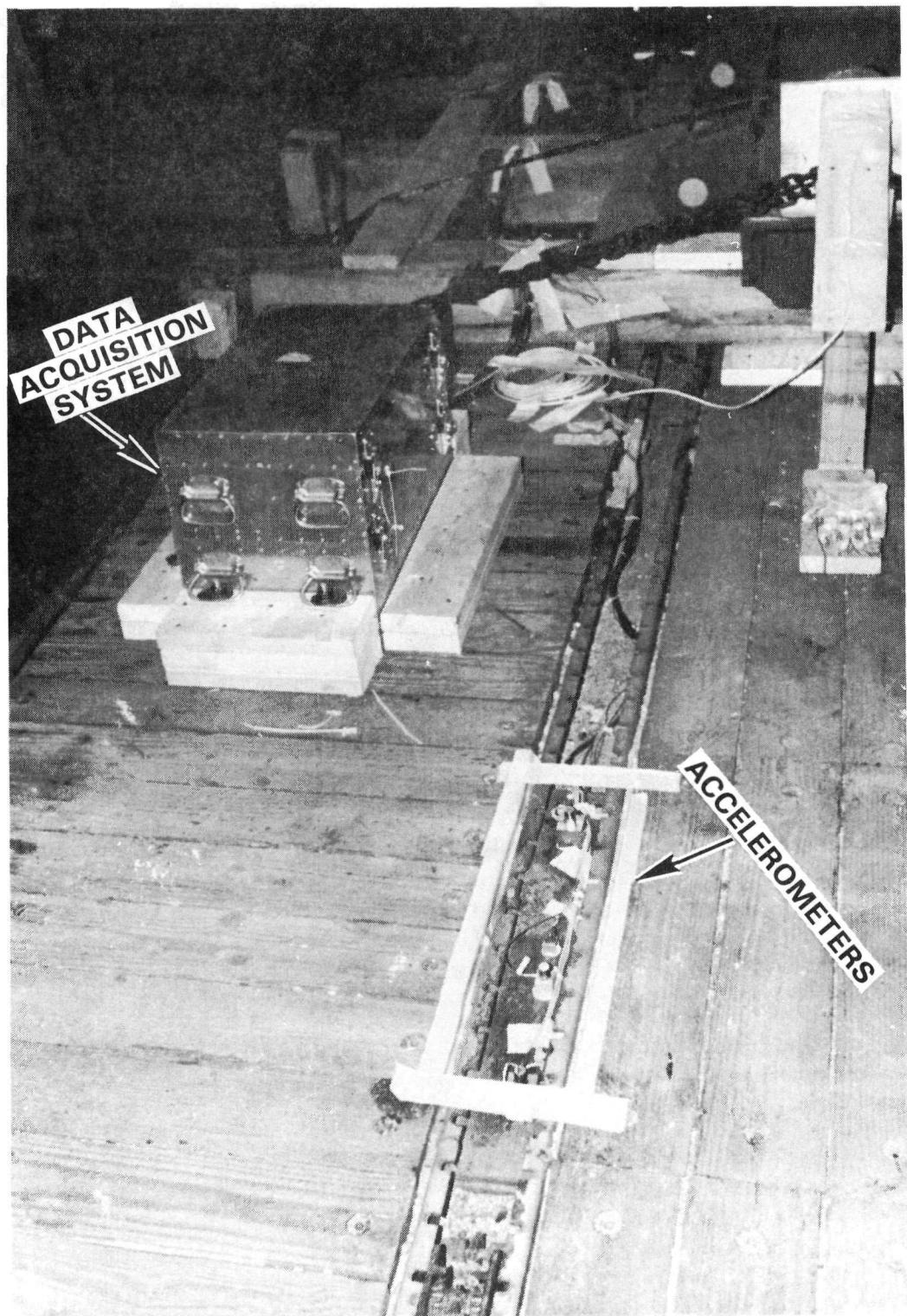


Figure 5. Accelerometer Mounting Over Rear Bolster Showing Data Acquisition System

Test Results

The environmental descriptions presented in this section summarize the data obtained during the rail shipment of a 45-tonne (50-ton) cargo from Denver, Colorado to Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Definitions of Dynamic Environments

Dynamic excitations delivered to cargo may be described as a mixture of vibration, occasional shock superimposed on the vibration, and shock that occurs in single isolated events such as rail coupling.

Vibration, the excitation that occurs whenever the carrier is in motion, is produced by the carrier's suspension system and frame members reacting to surface and/or wheel irregularities.

Superimposed shock is that short-duration excitation which often results in higher excitation amplitudes than those produced by vibration. This excitation results from specific occurrences during travel. Typical occurrences are (1) run-in; (2) run-out; and (3) crossing bridges, switches, and automobile cross roads. Characteristically, these excitations consist of decaying transient pulses intermixed with the vibration.

This report presents data fitting the above definitions only. Shock resulting from rail-coupling operations are reported in Reference 4.

Explanation of Data

The vibration data presented are zero-to-peak acceleration amplitude levels that include at least 99% of all amplitudes measured in each frequency band. The distribution of acceleration amplitudes in each frequency band is random, for which the probability distribution is nearly gaussian. This makes the reported amplitude levels approximately the three-sigma amplitude levels of excitations.

The superimposed shock data presented were reduced in single degree-of-freedom response spectra format. These spectra predict the maximum acceleration amplitudes to which single degree-of-freedom systems would respond when subjected to the complex transient pulse inputs. Response spectra were used because they permitted translation of complex input excitations into a more useful engineering format and permitted statistical summarization of different individual excitations. In generating these response spectra, 3% damping was used because experience has shown this to be representative of most hard-mounted systems.

Data Reduction

The data samples were recorded on magnetic tapes during shipment. An oscillograph record of all data tapes was produced to correlate specific events with the associated data tape segments to be used for data reduction. The events were identified for data reduction as either vibration or shock. Vibration data were reduced by data reduction program VIBRAN.⁶ This program counts the number of zero-to-peak acceleration amplitudes in predetermined amplitude ranges in preselected frequency bands. After the VIBRAN records were available, appropriate records were combined into composite records by program VAIL.⁷ The VAIL program combines VIBRAN records and displays the resulting distribution of zero-to-peak amplitudes in the same format as the individual VIBRAN records.

The shock records were reduced in response spectra format. The individual response spectra were then combined using program ZSHAIL.⁸ This program produces new spectra which show (1) an estimate of the mean response spectrum of the spectra being combined, (2) the peak acceleration of all the records combined, and (3) the estimated mean plus three standard deviations at discrete frequencies. The estimate of the standard deviation at each frequency is equal to

$$\hat{\sigma} = \left[\frac{\sum x^2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{n}}{n-1} \right]^{1/2},$$

where

x = acceleration amplitude at a discrete frequency

n = number of records being combined.

Recorded measurements from thirteen events were selected for data reduction for vibration descriptions. These events included flat track, undulating track, rough track, climbs, descents, curves, and multiple highway grade crossings. Train speeds during these events were between 40 and 89 km/hr (25 and 55 mph).

Recorded measurements from sixteen events were selected for data reduction for superimposed shock descriptions. These events included (1) run-in; (2) run-out; and (3) crossing switches, bridges, automobile cross roads, and a highway underpass. Train speeds during these events varied between 31 and 89 km/hr (19 and 55 mph).

Rail Car Data

Vibration

The vibration data presented herein are summaries of the cumulative zero-to-peak acceleration amplitude levels which include at least 99% of all accelerations measured in each frequency band. The summaries include data from all three accelerometer locations and represent a generic definition of input to cargo.

The highest of the cumulative 99% levels of zero-to-peak acceleration amplitudes occurred in the vertical axis across the entire frequency spectrum between 0 and 750 Hz. The vertical acceleration amplitudes were generally at or below 0.37 g except between 240 and 300 Hz where the acceleration amplitude was 0.52 g. Study of random vibration data which were reduced show that in this frequency band the concentration of energy was at approximately 250 Hz.

The vibration zero-to-peak acceleration amplitude levels in the transverse axis were equal to or higher than those in the longitudinal axis. The highest acceleration amplitude levels were 0.19 g in the 0- to 5- and 10- to 20-Hz frequency bands for the transverse axis and 0.10 g in the 180- to 240- and 500- to 750-Hz frequency bands in the longitudinal axis. Figure 6 is a histogram of the acceleration amplitude levels of vibration in all three axes. Details of the 99 percentile levels of zero-to-peak acceleration amplitudes in each frequency band and for each axis are given in Table 1.

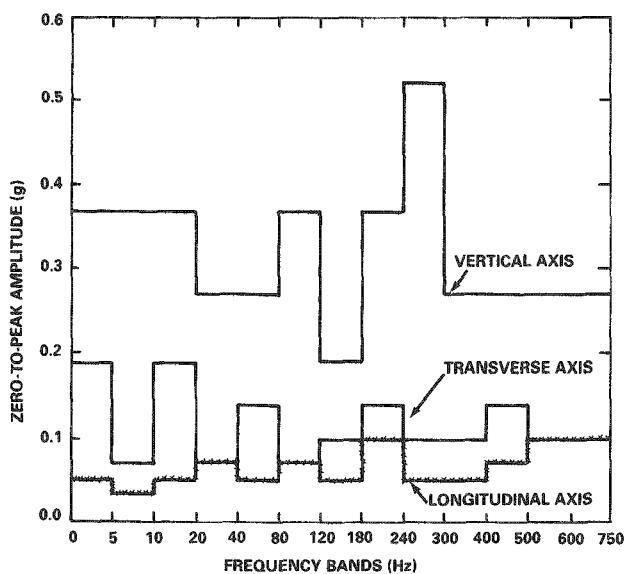


Figure 6. Rail Vibration-Input to Cargo (g) 99 Percentile Level of Zero-to-Peak Amplitudes

Table 1. Rail Vibration for 45-Tonne (50-Ton) Cargo

Frequency Band (Hz)	Input to Cargo at 99 Percentile Level of Zero-to-Peak Amplitude (g)		
	Longitudinal Axis	Transverse Axis	Vertical Axis
0-5	0.052	0.190	0.37
5-10	0.037	0.072	0.37
10-20	0.052	0.190	0.37
20-40	0.072	0.072	0.27
40-80	0.052	0.140	0.27
80-120	0.072	0.072	0.37
120-180	0.052	0.100	0.19
180-240	0.100	0.140	0.37
240-300	0.052	0.100	0.52
300-400	0.052	0.100	0.27
400-500	0.072	0.140	0.27
500-600	0.100	0.100	0.27
600-750	0.100	0.100	0.27

Shock

The shock data presented were obtained during the same shipment as the vibration data but from specific, identifiable events. These data were obtained when the instrumented rail car experienced run-in and run-out as well as when it crossed rail switches, road crossings, bridges, and highway underpasses. Since the instrumented rail car was equipped with hydraulic end-of-car devices, run-in events were insignificant. Run-out events were much more noticeable to the SNL personnel in the adjacent caboose as well as on the data tapes.

When the summarized shock response spectra were overlayed and the peak and mean plus three standard deviation envelopes were examined, it was found that the transverse axis had the lowest response amplitude over most of the 0.5- to 750-Hz frequency range. The vertical axis response amplitudes were generally equal to or slightly higher than the other two axes; however, the longitudinal axis response amplitudes were higher than the other two axes in the very low frequency between 0.5 and 1.5 Hz and again in the 80 to about 180 Hz range. Figure 7 shows the shock response spectra envelopes which envelop the peak and mean plus three standard deviation response spectra.

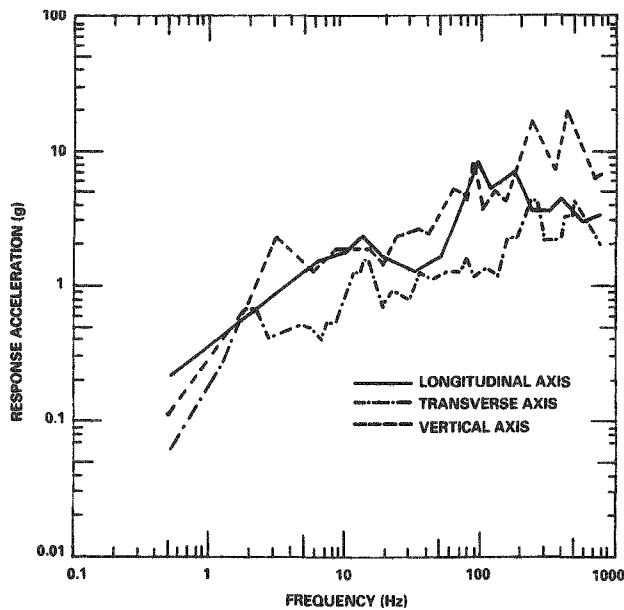


Figure 7. Mean Plus Three Standard Deviation Amplitude Envelopes of Shock Response Spectra; 3% Damping

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