GUIDELINES FOR USE OF EXTERNAL AND UNBONDED PRESTRESSING TENDONS IN BRIDGE STRUCTURES

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GUIDELINES FOR USE OF EXTERNAL AND UNBONDED PRESTRESSING TENDONS IN BRIDGE STRUCTURES

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Personnel of the Bridges Specifications and Standards Committee  
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PERSONNEL OF THE BRIDGES SPECIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
(As on 20-12-2004)

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<td>1.</td>
<td>V. Velayutham</td>
<td>Addl. Director General, Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport &amp; Highways, New Delhi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Convenor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>V.K. Sinha</td>
<td>Chief Engineer, Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highway, New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Co-Convenor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Chief Engineer (B) S&amp;R</td>
<td>Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport &amp; Highways, New Delhi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Member-Secretary)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(A.N. Dhodapkar)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>K.N. Agrawal</td>
<td>C-33, Chandra Nagar, Ghaziabad-201 011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>S. Ahmed</td>
<td>Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya PWD, Shillong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>C.R. Alimchandani</td>
<td>Chairman &amp; Managing Director, STUP Consultants Ltd., Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>A.K. Banerjee</td>
<td>B-210, (SF), Chitranjan Park, New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ashok Basa</td>
<td>Director (Tech.) B. Engineers &amp; Builders Ltd., Bhubaneswar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>P.C. Bhasin</td>
<td>ADG (B), MOST (Retd.) 324, Mandakini Enclave, New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>K.K. Gupta</td>
<td>House No.1149, Sector 19, Faridabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>A.R. Jambekar</td>
<td>Chief Engineer &amp; General Manager (Tech.) CIDCO, Navi Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>S.K. Jain</td>
<td>Director &amp; Head, Civil Engg. Department, Bureau of Indian Standards, New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>S.K. Kaushik</td>
<td>Chairman, Estate &amp; Works and Coordinator (TIFAC-CORE) IIT, Roorkee</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>C.V. Kand</td>
<td>Consultant, Bhopal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Ninan Koshi</td>
<td>DG (RD) &amp; Addl. Secy., MOST (Retd.), H-54, Residency Green, Gurgaon</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Prafulla Kumar</td>
<td>DG (RD) &amp; AS, MORT&amp;H (Retd.) D-86, Sector-56, Noida</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>P.Y. Manjure</td>
<td>Director, Freyssinet Prestressed Concrete Co. Ltd., Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>N.V. Merani</td>
<td>Principal Secy., Maharashtra PWD (Retd.), Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>M.K. Mukherjee</td>
<td>40/182, Chitranjan Park, New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>A.D. Narain</td>
<td>Director General (Road Dev.) &amp; Addl. Secretary, MOST (Retd.) B-186, Sector-26, NOIDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>S.K. Puri</td>
<td>Chief Engineer, Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways</td>
</tr>
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Members

C-33, Chandra Nagar, Ghaziabad-201 011
Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya PWD, Shillong
Chairman & Managing Director, STUP Consultants Ltd., Mumbai
B-210, (SF), Chitranjan Park, New Delhi
Director (Tech.) B. Engineers & Builders Ltd., Bhubaneswar
ADG (B), MOST (Retd.) 324, Mandakini Enclave, New Delhi
Managing Director, Consulting Engg. Services (I) Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi
House No.1149, Sector 19, Faridabad
Chief Engineer & General Manager (Tech.) CIDCO, Navi Mumbai
Director & Head, Civil Engg. Department, Bureau of Indian Standards, New Delhi
Chairman, Estate & Works and Coordinator (TIFAC-CORE) IIT, Roorkee
Consultant, Bhopal
DG (RD) & Addl. Secy., MOST (Retd.), H-54, Residency Green, Gurgaon
DG (RD) & AS, MORT&H (Retd.) D-86, Sector-56, Noida
Director, Freyssinet Prestressed Concrete Co. Ltd., Mumbai
Principal Secy., Maharashtra PWD (Retd.), Mumbai
40/182, Chitranjan Park, New Delhi
Director General (Road Dev.) & Addl. Secretary, MOST (Retd.) B-186, Sector-26, NOIDA
Chief Engineer, Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways
Chief Technical Advisor, L&T-Ramboll Consulting Engg. Ltd., Chennai
A-181, Sarita Vihar, New Delhi

(i)
IRC:SP:67-2005

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27. G. Sharan
28. N.K. Sinha
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43. A. Chakraborti
44. Dr. V.K. Raina

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Dy. Managing Director, Gammon India Ltd., Mumbai
Highway Research Station, Chennai
Member (T), National Highways Authority of India, New Delhi
DG (RD) & SS, MORT&H (Retd.) G-1365, Ground Floor, Chitranjan Park, New Delhi
BH-1/44, Kendriya Vihar Kharghar, Navi Mumbai
Managing Director, Tandon Consultants (P) Ltd., New Delhi
A-39/B, DDA Flats, Munirka, New Delhi
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HQ DGBR, Seema Sadak Bhavan, New Delhi
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Chepauk, Chennai
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(Indu Prakash), Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, New Delhi
(R.S. Sharma), Indian Roads Congress, Kama Koti Marg, Sector-6, R.K. Puram, New Delhi
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Corresponding Members
GUIDELINES FOR USE OF EXTERNAL AND UNBONDED PRESTRESSING TENDONS IN BRIDGE STRUCTURES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Reinforced, Prestressed and Composite Concrete Committee (B-6) of the Indian Roads Congress was reconstituted in 2003 with the following personnel:

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Addl. DGBR … Co-Convenor
T. Viswanathan … Member-Secretary

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Alok Bhowmick
A.N. Dhodapkar
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(Indu Prakash)
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(R.S. Sharma)

Corresponding Members
Ashok Basa
C.V. Kand

1.2. At its first meeting on 29th April, 2003, the Committee felt that in the light of the massive construction programme that was under execution in the highway sector, it was necessary to bring out guidelines on certain topics which were not adequately covered in the existing IRC Codes and Standards. The use of external and unbonded prestressing tendons in bridge structures was one of the topics selected. It was decided that while highlighting the special design and detailing requirements in each case, the guidelines would be generally in line with IRC:18 and IRC:21 with additional inputs from BS:5400, EURO and AASHTO codes, wherever necessary.

1.3. The initial draft of the guidelines was prepared by Shri P.Y. Manjure and revised by Shri S.G. Joglekar. The draft was discussed by the B-6 Committee at several meetings and finalized in its meeting held on 5th November, 2004. The draft document was approved by Bridges Specifications and Standards Committee in its meeting held on 20th December, 2004. The document was considered by IRC Council in its 173rd meeting held on 8th January, 2005 in Bangalore and approved without modifications.

2. SCOPE

The guidelines contain the additional and/or alternative considerations covering the design aspects, prestressing systems, materials, protection of steel, durability aspects and also, describe few details of the applications. The Designer is advised to consult relevant specialist literature on the subject, if further information is needed.

3. UNBONDED PRESTRESSING - APPLICATION

There are three types of applications
(i) In the first type, the unbonded prestressing
elements on their own comprise the total prestressing force. Segmentally
constructed bridge superstructures using external cables is an example of this type.

(ii) In the second type, the unbonded elements act as part of total prestressing force, the
other part being provided by bonded prestressing elements embedded in concrete. External prestressing provided
for repair/rehabilitation/strengthening of existing prestressed concrete bridges is an
example of this type. The external prestress may or may not contribute to the
enhancement of ultimate strength.

(iii) In the third type, the external prestressing is used as a means of applying external
load acting in the desired direction and quantum, and the deformation of the
structure due to subsequent live load – both in service and under ultimate
condition – do not affect the magnitude and direction significantly. The external
prestressing is taken as equivalent load only without considering its contribution
to the strength of the structure. Such is
the method of strengthening of RCC structures by using prestressing elements
to relieve part of the dead load effects.

In unbonded prestressing, no continuous bond is provided between the prestressing elements and
concrete, by virtue of which concrete and prestressing steel can develop structural interaction. In these structures prestressing elements are outside the concrete section and are
attached to it at discrete points of anchorages and deviators. The prestressing elements and the
concrete elements behave as different component-structures of the overall structure, acting in unison
by virtue of connection at anchorages and deviators, and thereby contribute to overall
strength. The local strains in any part can be calculated by first calculating the overall
deformations, i.e., relative displacements of common points of attachment and then analyzing
the component-structures separately.

It is possible to use unbonded prestressing elements which lie within the ducts provided in
concrete section, and thereby impose closely matching geometrical deflections on the two. Such
solutions have been used where long term monitoring of prestressing force and/or possible
replacement of cables, or augmentation of the force at a later date had been the design
requirement. However, for these cases also, the local strains in concrete and the prestressing
tendons are not identical.

4. MATERIALS

4.1. Prestressing Steel

Prestressing steels listed in Clause 3.5.1 of IRC:18-2000 are acceptable. In addition, factory
produced protected steels, such as, galvanised, epoxy coated, lubricated and sheathed steel strands
(in HDPE sheaths) are acceptable. For full specifications, relevant Indian Standards, or in
absence of the same, International Standards should be referred to. However, steel material
should pass the requirements of IRC:18-2000 Clause 3.5.1.

4.2. Sheathing

External tendons shall be housed in either High Density Poly-Ethylene (HDPE) sheaths or metallic
steel sheaths (plain or with protective coatings), which have smooth internal surfaces. The
sheathing ducts and connections should be fully leak-tight against water pressure equivalent to 1.1
× (maximum expected gravity head of grouting material + grouting pressure). The jointing
specifications and details should also be leak-tight and pressure resisting as above.

The materials of sheaths shall meet requirements of respective Indian Standards/IRC Standards.

4.3. Deviators, Anchorage Brackets, Suspenders

These items can be in R.C.C./P.S.C. forming parts of the main structure or in steel which is
embedded therein or fixed to the same by
anchoring or by mechanical fixing arrangement (e.g., by bolting or welding).

The steel fasteners, welding materials, etc. used for fabrication of such parts shall be conforming to IRC:24-2001. The materials and reinforcing steels used in R.C.C. portion shall be as per the requirements of IRC:21-2000.

4.4. Anchorages, Guide-tubes and All Parts of Prestressing System

Anchorages should preferably be of replaceable or re-usable type for possible replacement of tendon.

Anchorage systems should be factory manufactured under strict quality assurance/quality control, and supplied in appropriately protective packing. These items being of proprietary nature, their manufacturers should be got approved from competent authorities. The supplied product itself should be subjected to acceptance testing for satisfactory performance of the same. Guidelines for acceptance testing may be taken from 1FIB guidelines or from British Standards 2BS:4447-1973 (Reprinted in 1990).

Attention is specially brought to the requirement of passing dynamic test for two million cycles for the cable/anchorage assembly when tested in accordance with FIB or BS test procedure. Certificate of testing by independent testing laboratory using the assemblies similar to those proposed for the work in hand is a minimum level of acceptance for all applications. These should be supplemented by testing of not less than three samples from the materials supplied to site.

5. DESIGN

5.1. General

The provisions of IRC:6-2000, IRC:18-2000 and IRC:21-2000, for design are also applicable for bridges with unbonded prestressing steel except as discussed hereinafter. Although not explicitly stated in codes, the prestressing is treated partly as load and partly as a component of load-resisting mechanism (i.e., adding to the strength of section). When treated as load, it is treated as a permanent load varying between prestress level before losses and after long-term losses, with further provision that losses themselves can vary ±20 per cent from the mean design value. This method of design is used in “working load” or “allowable stress” method of design. When this method is supplemented (as is done in IRC:18-2000) by additionally stipulating minimum required ultimate strength equal to or greater than that required by “factored load combinations” the contribution of prestressing steel in ultimate resistance of section needs to be considered.

Note: In Limit State Design method, both Ultimate Limit State (ULS) and Serviceability Limit State (SLS) need to be checked for which detailed rules are given in codes using Limit State Philosophy for design. The requirements of IRC:18-2000 for ULS checking, need to be supplemented by suitable strength models to cover the case of external and unbonded prestress. - Refer Section 4.4.3. & Appendix.

5.2. Load, Load Combinations and Factored Loads For Ultimate Strength Requirements


The prestressing load is taken to vary between limits as described in 5.1 above. By implication the load factor for ultimate load on prestress is taken as 1.0 in IRC:18-2000. However, IRC:18 does not cover indeterminate structures. For such structures, a load factor of 1.2 for unfavourable combinations and 0.9 in favourable combinations is recommended for analysing the response of indeterminate structures and establishing required ultimate load resistance at different sections.

5.3. Ultimate Strength in Flexure

5.3.1. Principles: The contribution of the prestressing tendons to the resistance of
the sections should be limited to their additional strength beyond prestressing. This may be calculated assuming that the origin of the stress/strain relationship of the tendon is displaced by the effects of prestressing (Refer Fig.1 and Fig.2).

5.3.2. Section analysis: In absence of detailed rules (in IRC:18) for estimating the ultimate resistance in bending of sections with unbonded prestress, set of rules consistent with principles of 5.3.1 above are given in Appendix for ready reference.

5.3.3. Resistance to shear: Calculations for shear are required only for ultimate strength.

Sections with full prestressing provided by unbonded or external tendons shall be checked for shear by considering them as reinforced concrete sections subject to externally applied axial load (such as columns).

![Fig. 1. Stress-strain of Prestressing Steel](image1)

![Fig. 2. Strain Diagram of Typical Section](image2)

In members where partial prestress is provided by bonded tendons, the shear resistance should be checked as prestressed member (with bonded prestress), treating the unbonded prestress to provide only the external axial force as stated above. Where shear capacity itself is directly provided by - or augmented by - external unbonded prestress, the partial load-factor for prestressing load in total shear in ultimate load combination should be taken as 0.9. Its contribution to strength by further elongation should be neglected since additional strains by shear deformations are small.

5.3.4. Design of Anchorages/Deviator/Local Zone

(i) For external cables, the anchorages are normally external and the tendons may be required to be re-stressed or replaced. Also, anchorages have to be able to hold cables in stressed condition for the design life. Hence, the anchorages and all its components should be suitable to meet these requirements.

(ii) Anchorages, deviators, the supporting brackets, projecting concrete blisters, etc. should be designed for carrying full nominal ultimate capacity of tendon as a design load.

(iii) The load transmitted to concrete section by these elements should be resisted by appropriately designed and reinforced local zone of the main structure to which they are affixed. The spalling and bursting reinforcement shall not be less than that recommended by the manufacturer of anchorages. The zones immediately
behind the anchorage (and zone in front and sides of it in case of intermediate anchorages) should be properly reinforced taking into account the effects of dispersal of load in the concrete section.

(iv) The design of the deviators, in steel or in concrete, shall meet the requirements of IRC:18, IRC:21 and IRC:24 as applicable.

6. DETAILING

6.1. Alignment of External Cables

The tendons can be straight or draped using deviators depending on the particular requirements. Various profiles can be adopted to suit the required combination of axial load and bending. Careful consideration should be given to the overall stress distribution at critical sections and the local stresses at points of anchorages and deviators.

Some of the commonly adopted shapes for alignment are shown in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4. Typical arrangements of deviators are shown in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6. Typical details of anchorages often adopted in repair/rehabilitation works are shown in Fig. 7. For new works, normal embedded types of anchors or specially manufactured anchors for external application are used.

6.2. Straight Lengths Between Deviators

Only in case of embedded ducts, non-linear geometrical shapes can be provided for unbonded tendons. Otherwise, alignment of external cables will be in straight segments between points of attachment to the structure, such as, anchorages, deviators, etc.

For straight cables, the spacing of deviators and anchorages shall be such that the straight segments of cable are not longer than 12 times the depth of the beam or 12 m whichever is less. An intermediately placed deviator intended to break the long straight length shall project outwards beyond theoretical straight line joining the deviators on two sides to ensure that the tension in the tendon will keep it fully pressed against the intermediate deviator and keep the
tendon in place by friction. Also at all deviators tendons should be restrained against lateral movement. In all cases, the natural frequency of tendons with lengths held between the points of fixing should not be in range of 0.8 to 1.2 times the natural frequency of bridge element to which external cables are fixed. The natural frequency of tendon is a function of its effective mass per unit length rigidly attached to the tendon, its stress level and the distance between the points of attachment. It is given by:

\[ f = \frac{1}{2L} \frac{\sqrt{F}}{m} \]

where:

- \( f \): Frequency in cycles/sec.
- \( L \): Length between two supports consisting of anchorages or deviator.
- \( F \): Tension in the cable (force units).
- \( m \): Vibrating mass per unit length (inclusive of duct and grout).

6.3. Curvature at Deviators

In the absence of test results or other investigation justifying smaller values, the radius of curvature of tendons in the deviators should not be less than the values as specified in Table 1.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tendon (Strand Number-Size)</th>
<th>Minimum Radius (m)</th>
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<tr>
<td>19-13 mm and 12-15 mm</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-13 mm and 19-15 mm</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>53-13 mm and 37-15 mm</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 mm, 15 mm, or 18 mm dia.</td>
<td>40 times nominal dia. of stand</td>
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(The above values of radii may be adopted for wire cables with equivalent ultimate strength)

7. PROTECTION OF PRESTRESSING STEEL/ANCHORAGE/DEVIATORS

Prestressing steel shall be protected during temporarily exposed stages by coating with water soluble oils, grease or other suitable means. The
Fig. 3. Typical Alignment of Tendons in Repair/Rehabilitation Works

Fig. 4. Typical Alignment of Tendons for New Constructions

Fig. 5. Typical External Deviators in Steel in Repair/Rehabilitation Works
permanent protection to the steel shall be provided by cement grout, nuclear-grade grease (low sulphur contents) or other suitable means. The external exposed steel components of deviators, supporting brackets, etc. shall be protected by clear epoxy paint coating.

The anchorages and exposed free lengths of cables (left for de-tensioning) shall be properly housed in steel boxes and filled with protective agents, such as, nuclear grade-grease or other suitable material.

A periodic inspection and maintenance of these components should be carried out.

8. OTHER STRUCTURES

Additional provisions for special constructions, like, segmentally assembled bridge sections are given in the respective Chapters of the guidelines. Reference is also made to the specialist literature.

9. REFERENCES

In this publication, reference to the following IRC, BS and FIB Standards has been made. At the time to publications, the editions indicated were valid. All Standards are subject to revision and parties to agreements based on these guidelines.
are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the Standards.

9.1. Codes and Specifications

1. IRC:5-1998 Standard Specifications & Code of Practice for Road Bridges, Section I - General Features of Design (Seventh Revision)
2. IRC:6-2000 Standard Specifications & Code of Practice for Road Bridges, Section II - General Features of Design (Fourth Revision)
3. IRC:18-2000 Design Criteria for Prestressed Concrete Road Bridges (Post-Tensioned Concrete) (Third Revision)
4. IRC:21-2000 Standard Specifications and Code of Practice for Road Bridges, Section III Cement Concrete (Plain and Reinforced) (Third Revision)
5. IRC:24-2001 Standard Specifications and Code of Practice for Road Bridges, Section IV Steel Road Bridges (Second Revision)
CALCULATION OF ULTIMATE MOMENT OF RESISTANCE

A-1(1) When analysing a cross-section to determine its ultimate strength, the following assumptions should be made:

a) The strain distribution in the concrete in compression is derived from the assumption that plane sections remain plane.

b) The stresses in the concrete in compression are derived either from the stress-strain curve with design strength equal to 2/3 of $f_{ck}$ value. This is further reduced dividing by $\gamma_m = 1.5$, where $\gamma_m$ is material strength reduction factor for concrete. The strain at the outermost compression fibre is taken as 0.0035.

c) The tensile strength of the concrete is ignored.

d) The strains in bonded prestressing tendons and in any additional reinforcement, whether in tension or compression, are derived from the assumption that plane sections remain plane. In addition, the tendon will have an initial strain due to prestress after all losses.

e) The stresses in bonded prestressing tendons, whether initially tensioned or untensioned, and in additional reinforcement, are derived from the appropriate stress-strain curves, with $\gamma_m = 1.15$, where $\gamma_m$ is material strength reduction factor for steel.

f) The strain in unbonded tendons shall be assumed not to increase above the initial value due to prestress after all losses including $\gamma_m$ except that either.

i) In slabs and beams, the strain in the mid-span region of cables which are within 0.1d of the soffit at mid-span and which do not extend beyond the supports may be taken to increase by 0.0005, with no additional calculation.

ii) The strain in the tendons at failure may be calculated from a non-linear analysis of the structure. If this is done, checks shall be made to ensure that conventional “conservative” assumptions, such as, ignoring the tensile strength of concrete, do not have the effect of increasing the tendon strain and hence the ultimate strength.

g) Tendons and reinforcing bars which are anchored within a distance equal to h/2 of the section being considered shall be ignored. However, within h/2 of a simply supported end, all prestress which is anchored beyond the centre-line of the support may be considered effective.
(The official amendments to this document would be published by the IRC in its periodical, 'Indian Highways', which shall be considered as effective and as part of the code/guidelines/manual, etc. from the Date specified therein)