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How Do We Specify Concrete that is Resistant to ASR?

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Jason H. Ideker Background

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Professor at Oregon State University	Fundamental cement-based materials research	Working in the area of ASR since 2001 as an undergraduate at Georgia Tech	Co-Author of ACI 201.2R-16 - Guide to Durable Concrete	Chair - RILEM TC ASR
2008-Present	Alkali-silica reaction, test methods, prevention, mitigation in structures Early-age properties of cement-based materials, calcium aluminate cements Translating laboratory and field experience into standardization		Secretary of Subcommittee ASTM C 09.50 "Risk Management for Alkali-Aggregate Reactivity"	Risk assessment of concrete mature designs with alkali-silica reactive (ASR) aggregates

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Overview

- ASR Basics
- Specifying ASR resistant concrete
- Proper test methods are critical: A Case Study
- Current research

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Alkali-Aggregate Reaction (AAR) { **Alkali-Carbonate Reaction (ACR) <1% of cases**
Alkali-Silica Reaction (ASR) > 99% of cases

Alkali-Carbonate Reaction (ACR) – ACR occurs between alkali hydroxides and certain argillaceous dolomitic limestones. This reaction is characterized by rapid expansion and extensive cracking of the affected concrete. ACR is a serious, but fortunately rare, variety of AAR.

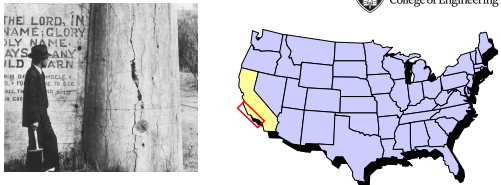
Alkali-Silica Reaction (ASR) – is associated with the dissolution of silica (SiO₂) in the aggregate and the subsequent formation of alkali-silica gel in the aggregate and concrete.

We will only be dealing with ASR today

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History of ASR



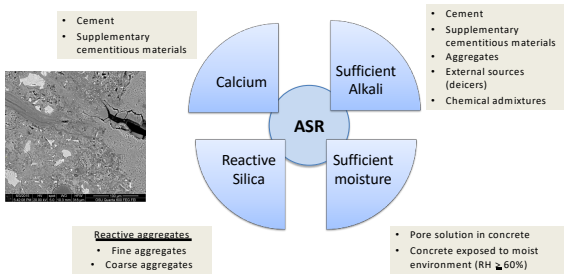
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- First discovered in the late 1930's
- In Monterey County & Los Angeles County
- Thomas Stanton of California State Division of Highways

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Alkali-silica reaction (ASR)



- Calcium**
 - Cement
 - Supplementary cementitious materials
- Sufficient Alkali**
 - Cement
 - Supplementary cementitious materials
 - Aggregates
 - External sources (deicers)
 - Chemical admixtures
- Sufficient moisture**
 - Pore solution in concrete
 - Concrete exposed to moist environment (RH ≥ 50%)
- Reactive Silica**
 - Pore solution in concrete
 - Concrete exposed to moist environment (RH ≥ 50%)

Reactive aggregates

- Fine aggregates
- Coarse aggregates

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Reactive Silica

Si O OH Na or K

Mineral
 Opal → Quartz

Chemical composition
 SiO_2

Structure
 Disordered, amorphous
 More crystalline, ordered

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ASR Manifestations

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We will talk about ASR test methods...a lot!

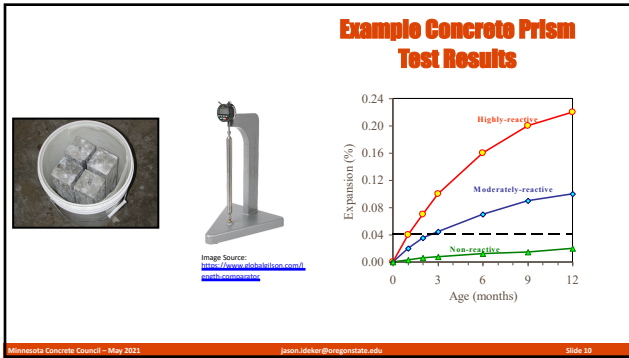
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Accelerated mortar bar test (AMBT) ASTM C1260 and C1567 1N NaOH 25 x 25 x 285 mm 80°C, 14 days	Concrete prism test (CPT) ASTM C1293 38°C 75 x 75 x 285 mm 1 year; no prevention 2 years; with prevention	Outdoor exposure blocks 380 x 380 x 710 mm
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Increasing reliability Increasing test duration

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Prevention of ASR in Fresh Concrete

Most Supplementary Cementing Materials (SCMs) can be used to control ASR

- SCM composition (CaO, SiO₂, Al₂O₃, Na₂O)
- Dosage rate
- Nature and level of aggregate reactivity
- Alkali content supplied by the portland cement (and other sources also important)

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Prevention of ASR in Fresh Concrete

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 - SCM composition (CaO, SiO₂, Al₂O₃, Na₂O)
 - Dosage rate
 - Nature and level of aggregate reactivity
 - Alkali content supplied by the portland cement (and other sources also important)
- **Lithium can also be used to control ASR in fresh concrete, and may be used in combination with SCMs**
 - Provided Li / (Na+K) is sufficient (can be determined through testing)
 - Depends on aggregate reactivity level
- **Restricting alkali contribution**
 - Alkali loading is key, not just alkali content of portland cement
 - Low alkali cement – energy intensive
- **Avoid reactive aggregates**
 - Usually not an option
 - Highly critical structures

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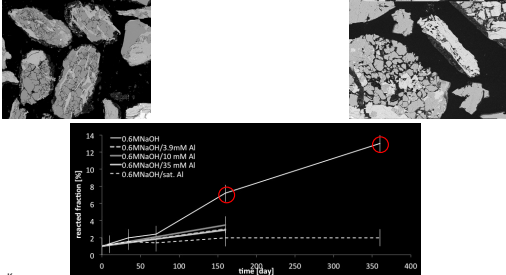
SCM Prevention Mechanisms for ASR



1. Reduce CH (lower pH)
 - Reduce pore solution alkalinity
2. We produce more C-S-H and/or C-A-S-H (pozzolanic reaction)
 - Better mechanical properties (e.g. strength)
 - Refine pore network (e.g. higher tortuosity, lower permeability)
 - Reduces CH (lower pH)
3. Alumina in pore solution protects silica from dissolution (aggregate protection)
4. We use less OPC (dilution, reduce alkalis)
 - But what about SCMs with alkalis?

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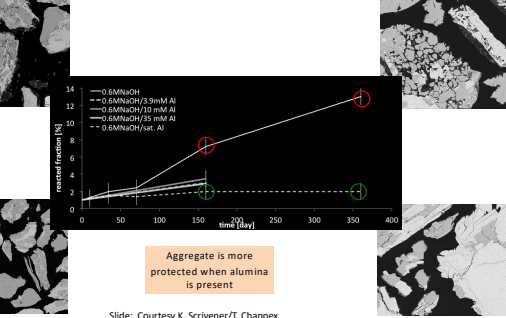


Slide: Courtesy K. Scrivener/T. Chappex

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Aggregate is more protected when alumina is present

Slide: Courtesy K. Scrivener/T. Chappex

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How do we design concrete mixtures that are resistant to ASR?

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ASR Standards

Two main approaches:

- Prescriptive specifications
- Performance-based specifications

North American Standards Associations:

- CSA, ASTM, AASHTO, FHWA – use a combination of these approaches
- ACI 201-2R-16 gives general recommendations

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ASTM C 1778 - Risk Minimization for AAR

Standard Guide for Reducing the Risk of Deleterious Alkali-Aggregate Reaction in Concrete

1. Scope

1.1 This guide provides guidance on how to address the potential for deleterious alkali aggregate reaction (AAR) in concrete construction. This guide includes the general identifying test procedures, identification criteria (IMC) and identification criteria (IC) aggregates through material selection, and the use of aggregate with low alkali content. It also includes the use of aggregate with low alkali content and a concrete mixture design approach to reduce the risk of deleterious alkali aggregate reaction (AAR) in concrete construction. This guide is intended for use by concrete designers, engineers, and contractors in the design and construction of concrete structures. It is not intended to be used as a prescriptive specification for concrete. It is intended to be used as a guide to help designers, engineers, and contractors in the design and construction of concrete structures.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards

C1396 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Hydraulic Cement Mortar

C1397 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Freshly Mixed Concrete

C1398 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Hardened Concrete

C1399 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Concrete

C1400 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Concrete

C1401 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Concrete

C1402 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Concrete

C1403 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Concrete

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C1497 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Concrete

C1498 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Concrete

C1499 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Concrete

C1500 Standard Test Method for Chloride Content of Concrete

One of the most comprehensive and progressive specifications in existence, aligns with AASHTO, FHWA and CSA.

Prescriptive & performance alternatives

Allows the use of reactive aggregates with the following preventive measures:

- Limiting the alkali content of the concrete
- Use of fly ash
- Use of slag
- Use of silica fume

The actual level of prevention varies with "risk" as defined by:

- Reactivity of the aggregate
- Nature of the structure (includes design life)
- Exposure condition

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ASTM C 1778 - Prescriptive Approach




TABLE 1 Classification of Aggregate Reactivity

Aggregate Reactivity Class	Description of Aggregate Reactivity	1-Year Expansion in Test Method (C109) %	14-Day Expansion in Test Method (C109) %
R0	Non-reactive	<0.04	<0.10
R1	Moderately reactive	≥0.04 - <0.12	≥0.10 - <0.30
R2	Highly reactive	≥0.12 - <0.24	≥0.30 - <0.45
R3	Very highly reactive	≥0.24	≥0.45

Select the structure size and exposure category → Which defines the level of prevention needed

Size and Exposure Conditions	Aggregate Reactivity Class					
	R0	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Non-massive ^a concrete in a dry ^b environment	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3		
Massive ^c elements in a dry ^b environment	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4		
All concrete exposed to humid air, liquid or immersed	Level 1	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5		
All concrete exposed to alkalis in service ^d	Level 1	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6		

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ASTM C 1778 - Prescriptive Approach




TABLE 3 Structures Classified on Basis of the Severity of Consequences Should ASR^a Occur (Modified for Highway Structures from RILEM TC 191-ARP)

Class	Consequence of ASR	Acceptability of ASR	Examples ^b
Class SC1	Safety, economic, or environmental consequences small or negligible	Some deterioration from ASR may be tolerated	Non-load-bearing elements inside buildings Concrete elements not exposed to moisture Temporary structures (service life < 5 years)
Class SC2	Some safety, economic, or environmental consequences if major deterioration	Moderate risk of ASR is acceptable	Sidewalks, curbs, and gutters Elements with service life < 40 years
Class SC3	Significant safety, economic, or environmental consequences if minor damage	Minor risk of ASR may be acceptable	Pavements Foundations elements Retaining walls Culverts Highway barriers Rural, low-volume roads Precast elements in which economic costs of replacement are severe Service life normally 40 to 74 years
Class SC4	Serious safety, economic, or environmental consequences if minor damage	ASR cannot be tolerated	Major bridges Power plants Dams Nuclear facilities Water treatment facilities Waste water treatment facilities Tunnels Critical elements that are very difficult to inspect or repair Service life normally >=75 years

Select your Structure Classification

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ASTM C 1778 - Prescriptive Approach




TABLE 4 Determining Level of Prevention

Level of ASR Risk (Table 2)	Classification of Structure (Table 3)			
	Class SC1	Class SC2	Class SC3	Class SC4
Risk Level 1	V	V	V	V
Risk Level 2	V	V	W	X
Risk Level 3	V	W	X	Y
Risk Level 4	W	X	Y	Z
Risk Level 5	X	Y	Z	ZZ
Risk Level 6	V	Z	ZZ	Y

Determine the level of prevention → Select SCM replacement levels

TABLE 6 Minimum Levels of SCM to Provide Appropriate Level^a of Prevention

Type of SCM ^b	Alkali Content of SCM (Si/Na-Cu)	Minimum Replacement Level ^a (% by mass)			
		Level W	Level X	Level Y	Level Z
Fly ash ^c (CaO ≤ 18%)	<3.0	15	20	25	35
	3.0 - 4.0	20	25	30	40
	<1.0	25	35	50	65
Slag Cement	<1.0	2.0 × KGA	2.5 × KGA	3.0 × KGA	4.0 × KGA
		or	or	or	or
Silica Fume ^d (SiO ₂ ≥ 85%)		1.2 × LBA	1.5 × LBA	1.8 × LBA	2.5 × LBA

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Performance Based Approach

- **ASTM C 295** - Standard Guide for Petrographic Examination of Aggregates for Concrete
- **ASTM C 227** - Standard Test Method for Potential Alkali Reactivity of Cement-Aggregate Combinations (Mortar-Bar Method)
- **ASTM C 441** - Standard Test Method for Effectiveness of Mineral Admixtures or Ground Blast-Furnace Slag in Preventing Excessive Expansion of Concrete Due to the Alkali-Silica Reaction – **Not recommended for ASR prevention evaluation**

} Aggregate Tests

- **ASTM C 1260** - Standard Test Method for Potential Alkali-Silica Reactivity of Aggregates (Accelerated Mortar-Bar Method)
- **ASTM C 1567** Standard Test Method for Determining the Potential Alkali-Silica Reactivity of Combinations of Cementitious Materials and Aggregate (Accelerated Mortar-Bar Method)


} Mortar Tests

- **ASTM C 1293** - Standard Test Method for Concrete Aggregates by Determination of Length Change of Concrete Due to Alkali-Silica Reaction (Concrete Prism Test)

} Concrete Test

Recommended Tests

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Proper Test Methods are Critical
Case Study Example

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Mactaquac Generation Station

Aggregate: Greywacke

Testing methods ASTM C 227
mortar prisms over 38C water

at the time showed it was “non-reactive”

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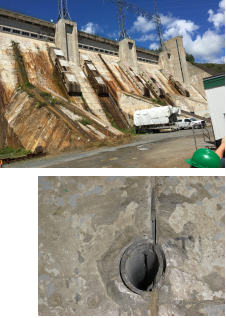
Proper Test Methods are Critical
Mactaquac Generation Station

Significant expansion due to ASR
~\$7 million per year spent on efforts to reduce the ill-effects of ASR

Intake Structure
Grown vertically by ~23 cm (~1 foot!)
Removed 63.5 cm (~2.5 feet) of concrete by slot cutting

~120 to 150 microstrain/year of unrestrained expansion

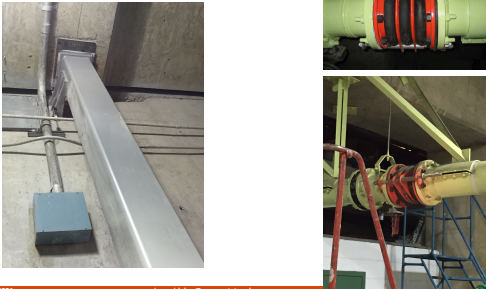
Service Life - ~150 years
How long will this last? -2030 - Complete replacement



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Dealing with ASR at Mactaquac



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Slot Cutting to accommodate expansion




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Mactaquac Generation Status

Reconstruction – 2030 ??


- Number of alternatives investigated
- Construction of a similar powerhouse, intake and 10-bay spillway
- 500,000 m3 of concrete (654,000 yds³)
- Same aggregate from excavation will be used
- Extensive study started in 2005 to determine most effective and economic means for preventing future AAR



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MACTAGUAC LIFE ACHIEVEMENT PROJECT



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The Mactaquac Generating Station is a run of the river hydro facility with an installed generation capacity of 660 MW, supplying about 12 per cent of New Brunswick homes and businesses with clean, low-cost power.

The facility began generating electricity in 1968. Since the 1980s, concrete portions of the hydro station have been affected by a chemical reaction called alkali-aggregate reaction. The reaction causes the concrete to swell and crack and has required substantial annual maintenance and repairs.

NB Power is proposing a project to ensure the station can operate to its intended 100-year lifespan with a modified approach to maintenance and adjusting and replacing equipment over time. This recommendation follows three years of expert research, including input from science, engineers, the public and First Nations.

This approach will meet all safety and environmental requirements. It will allow NB Power to take into account changes in cost, technology and electricity demand while ensuring a steady supply of clean, renewable power for New Brunswickers.

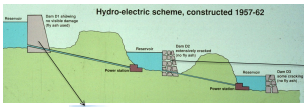
<https://www.nbpower.com/en/about-us/projects/mactaquac-project>

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Use of Fly Ash


Hydro-electric scheme, constructed 1957-62



Nasty-Mech Dam
(25% F. Ash)



Dinas Dam
(No Fly Ash)

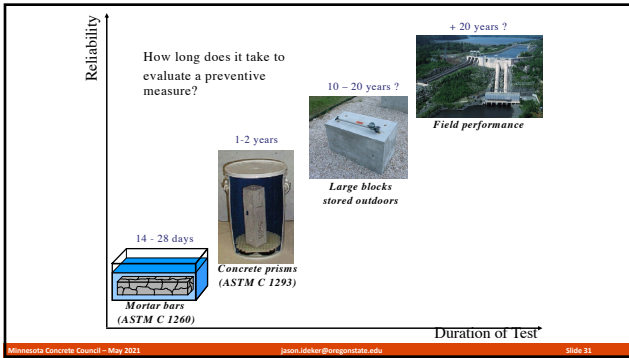


Structure	Year	Concrete Volume (m³)	Concrete Volume (yds³)	Notes
K'asson	1957	100	127	# Aggregate = crack
E. side of K'asson	1957	100	127	# Aggregate = crack + gal
M. side of K'asson	1957	100	127	# Aggregate = crack + gal
Mactaquac	1962	100	127	# Aggregate = crack
E. side of Mactaquac	1962	100	127	# Aggregate = crack + gal
Nasty-Mech	1962	100	127	# Fly Ash = gal

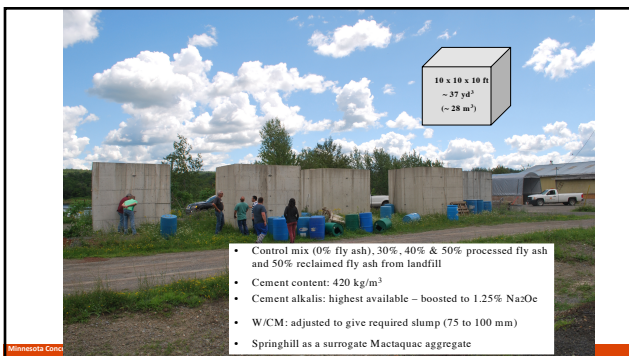
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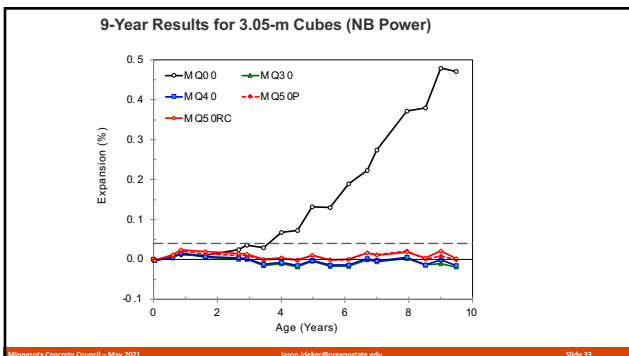
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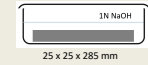





Our biggest practical challenge:
The reliability of current laboratory (accelerated) test methods

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ASR test methods (third reminder)



<p>Accelerated mortar bar test (AMBT)</p> <p>ASTM C1260 and C1567</p>  <p>25 x 25 x 285 mm</p>  <p>80°C, 14 days</p>	<p>Concrete prism test (CPT)</p> <p>ASTM C1293</p>  <p>75 x 75 x 285 mm</p>  <p>38°C, 1 year, no prevention 2 years, with prevention</p>	<p>Outdoor exposure blocks</p>   <p>380 x 380 x 710 mm</p>
<p>Increasing reliability</p>		<p>Increasing test duration</p>

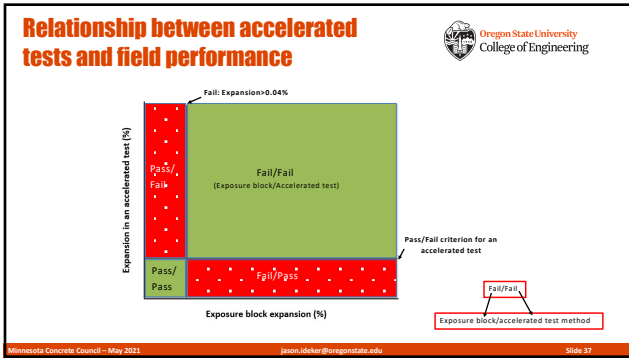
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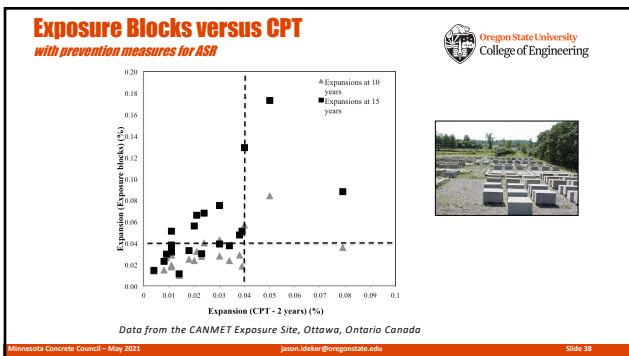
<p>Austin, Texas USA</p>  <p>University of Texas at Austin</p>	<p>Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada</p>  <p>University of New Brunswick</p>	<p>Corvallis, Oregon USA</p>  <p>Oregon State University</p>
<p>Port Aransas, Texas USA</p>  <p>Port Aransas, Texas USA</p>	<p>Treat Island, Maine USA</p>  <p>Treat Island, Maine USA</p>	<p>Newport, Oregon USA</p>  <p>Newport, Oregon USA</p>

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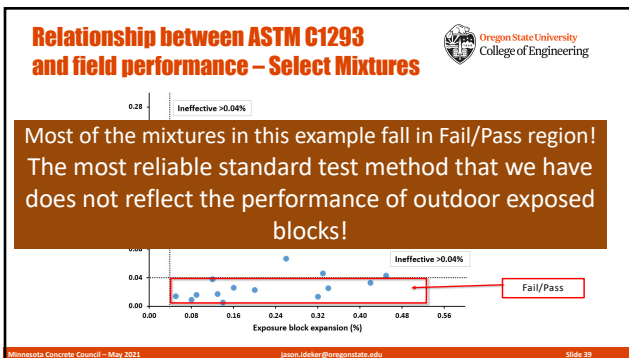
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Recent research




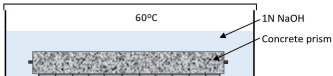
- AASHTO T380 - Miniature Concrete Prism Test – developed by Rangaraju and Latifee in 2010's.
- Validated for a wide range of aggregates for reactivity testing, only minor work done with SCMs (fly ash was the focus)
- **Benchmark** the MCPT against outdoor exposure blocks for efficacy of a wide range of prevention measures.

Tanesi, J., Drimalas, T., Chopperlu, K.S.T., Beyene, M., Ideker, J.H., Kim, H., Montanari, L. and Ardani, A., "Divergence between Performance in the Field and Laboratory Test Results for Alkali-Silica Reaction," Transportation Research Record, April 16, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361191720173266>.

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Miniature-Concrete Prism Test (MCPT) AASHTO T380

- 50 x 50 x 285 mm bars
- w/cm = 0.45
- 60°C, immersed in 1N NaOH solution
- 56 to 84 days

□ MCPT provided reliable aggregate reactivity characterization in a shorter duration (56/84 days) (Rangaraju et al. 2016)

- 33 different reactive and nonreactive aggregates
- Compared to CPT and AMBT results

□ Needs validation for mixtures with wide range of preventive measures

□ Needs benchmarking to the outdoor exposure blocks


Efficiency of prevention	% Expansion limits at 56 days
Effective	< 0.020%
Uncertain*	0.020% - 0.025%
Not effective	> 0.025%

*Recommend retest with MCPT using a higher dosage of prevention

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Materials and Test Matrix



MCPT and CCT: **Alkali boosted mixtures** (HRC, UT Austin)

Mixtures	Reactive Coarse aggregate		Reactive Fine aggregate	
	Spratt	Placitas	Wright	Jobe
GPC	✓	✓	✓	✓
20% F fly ash	✓	✓	✓	✓
30% F fly ash	✓	✓	✓	✓
40% C fly ash	✓	✓	✓	✓
40% Slag	✓	✓	✓	✓
50% Slag	✓	✓	✓	✓
100% Lithium	✓	✓	✓	✓
35% Slag + 5% Silica fume	✓	✓	✓	✓

prevention options (indicated by arrows in the matrix)

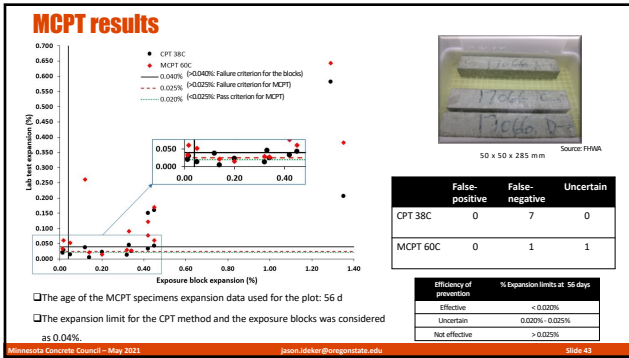
Spratt: Highly reactive; Siliceous limestone **Wright:** Highly reactive; Natural river sand with chert

Placitas: Highly reactive; Mixed mineralogy gravel with volcanics **Jobe:** Very highly reactive; Mixed quartz/chert/feldspar

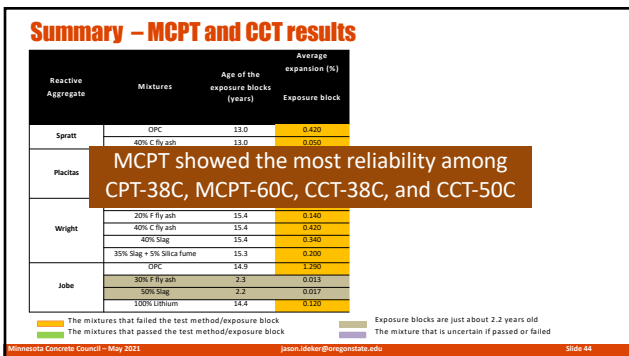
Springhill: Highly reactive; Graywacke Note: Used ASTM C1778 classification of aggregate reactivity

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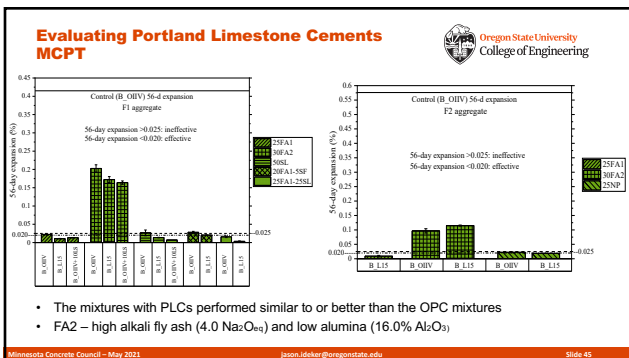
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NCHRP 10-103
 Improving Guidance of AASHTO R 80/ASTM C 1778 for Alkali-Silica Reactivity (ASR) Potential and Mitigation

Oregon State University
 College of Engineering

- Cast exposure blocks with low/moderate alkali loadings
 - Focus on prevention
 - Use prescriptive approach and existing data to select help inform prevention material quantities
- Investigate “new” accelerated test methods
 - Benchmark to existing field sites
 - Allow future benchmarking to new blocks

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New Project to Address Disconnect and Alkali loading Question

UTA, UNB, OSU Sites
land and marine

~450 moderate alkali loading blocks

Will provide long-term benchmarking of highway representative concrete

Accelerated Block Curing

~30 mixtures subjected to accelerated curing at 38C and/or greenhouse type condition

Rapid link to accelerated laboratory tests in this project

Laboratory Tests

50 ASTM C1293 (reg)
 50 ASTM C1293 (mod alkali)
 125 ASTM C1293 (alk. Wrapped)
 125 MCPT (1 N NaOH, pore soln soak)
 125 UNBCCT

- Data across accelerated tests will be compared to determine sensitivity to alkali loading/SCMs
- Data from accelerated block curing and laboratory tests, combined with information on existing sites will inform improvements to AASHTO R80 and ASTM C1778

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Conclusions

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 College of Engineering

- Not all concrete is susceptible to ASR
 - Must have reactive aggregate, fine or coarse
- ASR can be prevented through proper use of supplementary cementitious materials, lithium nitrate and/or low alkali contents
 - Prescriptive or performance-based approach
- Reliable rapid test methods are still a challenge
 - Significant research thrust

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THE CORVALLIS WORKSHOPS
 Concrete Fit for Purpose and Planet
 June 22-24, 2022
<http://thecorvallisworkshops.org/>
<http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/concreteshortcourse/>

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College of Engineering

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Thank you!

Questions

Infrastructure Materials Group at OSU
 - <https://ccc.oregonstate.edu/infrastructure-materials-laboratories>

Ideker Research Group Website
 - <https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/jasonhideker/>

ICAAAR Database
 - <https://icaarconcrete.org/>

Corvallis Workshops
 - <https://thecorvallisworkshops.org/>

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