

Shear Strength of Beams with Deformed Steel Fibers

Evaluating an alternative to minimum transverse reinforcement

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Except for beams with an overall height not greater than 250 mm (10 in.), 2.5 times the flange thickness, or 0.5 times the web width b_w , Section 11.5.6.1 of ACI 318M-05¹ (ACI 318-05²) requires minimum shear reinforcement in the form of stirrups or hoops in beams when the factored shear force V_u exceeds $0.5\phi V_c$. Here, ϕ is the strength reduction factor for shear and V_c is the nominal shear strength provided by concrete. In most cases, V_c is taken as $0.17\sqrt{f'_c}b_wd$ ($2\sqrt{f'_c}b_wd$), where d is the effective depth of the beam.

Besides providing shear strength through truss action V_s , the addition of minimum shear reinforcement helps control diagonal crack widths and fosters a more uniform distribution of diagonal cracks in the beam webs. Thus, for a given average state of strain, members with minimum shear reinforcement exhibit smaller crack widths and an increase in shear resistance provided by aggregate interlock compared to members without web reinforcement. This is particularly important in large members, where the so-called "size effect" might lead to shear strengths lower than the concrete contribution given in ACI 318.³

Although shear reinforcement in beams typically consists of steel bars bent in the form of stirrups or hoops, the addition of deformed steel fibers to the concrete has also

been shown to enhance shear resistance and ductility in reinforced concrete beams.⁴ These fibers are typically hooked or crimped, as shown in Fig. 1. When used in reinforced concrete beams without transverse reinforcement, fibers increase shear strength by providing post-cracking diagonal tension resistance. The fibers also enhance cracking distribution, similar to the effect of stirrups. This leads to reduced crack widths, and thus an increase in shear resistance through aggregate interlock. The ability of fibers to foster multiple web diagonal cracks is clearly illustrated in Fig. 2(a) and (b), in which the cracking pattern at failure for a reinforced concrete beam without shear reinforcement is compared with that of an identical fiber-reinforced concrete (FRC)

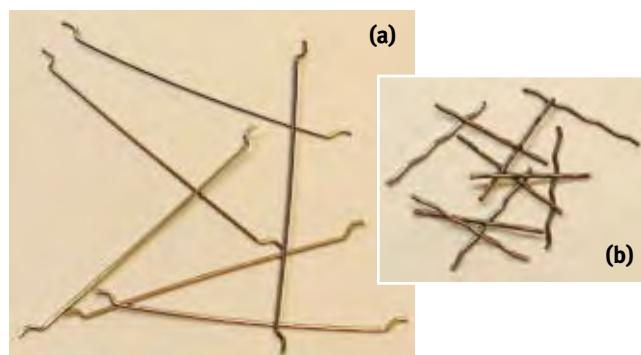


Fig. 1: Typical deformed steel fibers: (a) hooked fibers; and (b) crimped fibers

Note: Coefficients and variables are in SI units, followed by conversion to in.-lb units in parentheses.

beam containing a 1.0% volume fraction of hooked steel fibers.⁴ The average shear stress versus deflection responses for these two beams, as well as those for a pair of identical beams (one with and one without steel fibers) tested to evaluate the consistency of the results, are shown in Fig. 3. The addition of hooked steel fibers led to a substantially higher shear resistance and ductility compared with that of the companion beams without fibers.

The ability of fibers to enhance the shear behavior of reinforced concrete flexural members was recently evaluated by ACI Subcommittee 318-F, New Materials, Products, and Ideas. The study evaluated the use of deformed steel fibers as minimum shear reinforcement for beams subjected to shear forces ranging from $0.085 \sqrt{f'_c b_w d}$ to $0.17 \sqrt{f'_c b_w d}$ ($\sqrt{f'_c b_w d}$ to $2 \sqrt{f'_c b_w d}$), which typically correspond to $0.5V_c$ and V_c , respectively. These

limits typically define the range where ACI 318^{1,2} would require minimum transverse reinforcement, even though the nominal shear strength attributed to the concrete is not exceeded. Results from numerous investigations, compiled into a database, support the use of deformed steel fibers as minimum shear reinforcement in lieu of stirrups or hoops for this range of shear demand. Although the presented data clearly indicate that fibers improve shear resistance in flexural members, they are limited to beams without shear reinforcement. Additional experimental data are required to evaluate the effectiveness of fibers as shear reinforcement in other types of flexural members such as columns or slabs. The information contained in the database is summarized in Table 1. An electronic copy of the complete database can be obtained by accessing the online version of this article at www.concreteinternational.com or by contacting ACI Headquarters.

DATABASE OF BEAM TESTS

As indicated previously, a database was constructed, comprising results from the tests of 147 FRC beams with deformed steel fibers and 45 companion beams without fibers.⁴⁻²⁰ The following parameter ranges were considered:

- Effective beam depth d : 180 mm (7 in.) $\leq d \leq 570$ mm (22.5 in.);
- Shear span-to-effective depth ratio a/d : $1.0 \leq a/d \leq 6.0$;
- Cylinder concrete compressive strength f'_c : 17.8 MPa (2.6 ksi) $\leq f'_c \leq 103.8$ MPa (15.1 ksi);
- Fiber volume fraction V_f : $0.25\% \leq V_f \leq 2.0\%$ (0.19 kN/m 3 [33 lb/yd 3] $\leq V_f \leq 1.53$ kN/m 3 [263 lb/yd 3]);
- Steel fiber type: hooked or crimped except for five beams in which a combination of straight and hooked



Fig. 2: Typical cracking patterns for beams tested at the University of Michigan:⁴ (a) reinforced concrete beam without steel fibers; and (b) reinforced concrete beam containing steel fibers

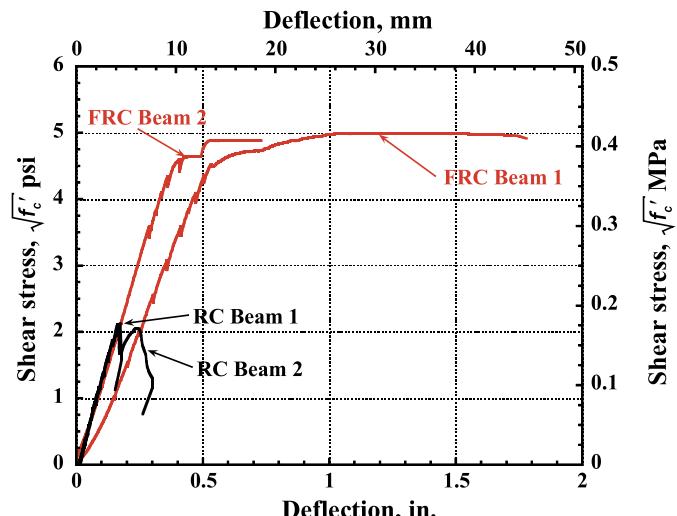


Fig. 3: Normalized shear stress versus deflection behavior for reinforced concrete beams with and without steel fiber reinforcement tested at the University of Michigan⁴

