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~ D

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TECHINCAL NOTE

Use of the Wind Tunnel Test Method for Obtaining Design Wind Loads on Roof-Mounted Solar Arrays

Gregory A. Kopp, M.ASCE'; and David Banks, M.ASCE'

Abstract

ASCE 7 does not provide design wind loads for roof-mounted solar panels. This paper discusses the use of the wind tunnel test method, called Method 3 in ASCE 7-05, which was originally intended for obtaining design wind loads for individual buildings. Because roof-mounted solar arrays are generally mounted in many configurations on many buildings of many different shapes, additional requirements are necessary to use Method 3 in this situation. The paper describes these additional requirements.

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CE Database subject headings: Wind loads: Wind tunnels. Author keywords: Wind loads: Wind tunnels.

Introduction

(such as solar panels) that are not well described by the shapes tab lated in the standards. Typically, an atmospheric boundary layer (ABL) wind tunnel is necessary for this, although other types of win tunnels can be used with sufficient care. Wind load coefficients in ASCE 7 come from such ABL wind tunnel studies. For example, the

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than those for building roots, even aspects like root zones, such as those used in ASCE 7, can be very different for arrays and roofs (Ko pet al. 2012). Thus, it is not appropriate to use these roof loads and zones to estimate loads on tilted solar panels; however, one can mimic the enveloping procedure used to obtain the wind loads and roof zones in ASCE 7.

It needs to be emphasized that using wind tunnel tests to determin generally applicable wind loads and roof zone maps for solar array on low-rise buildings is a somewhat unusual use of Method 3. The wind tunnel testing provisions in ASCE 7 were intended for individu buildings, for which test data are used directly for the design of the building, following accepted procedures. Thus, no generalization o the data is required for its use in these design situations. In contra such generalization is quite desirable for roof-mounted solar array that are placed on a wide range of building shapes in a wide range configurations, rather than testing for each and every situation. In short, this procedure would be akin to using multiple Method 3 test

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