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Guide for Steel Hull Welding

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Guide for Steel Hull Welding

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Abstract

This guide provides information to users in the marine construction industry as to the best practical methods to weld steel hulls for ships, barges, mobile offshore drilling units, and other marine vessels. This guide provides information on steel plates, shapes, castings, and forgings; their selection; and their weldability. It discusses welding processes and proper design for welding. Hull construction is presented in terms of preparation of materials, erection and fitting, and control of distortion. Qualification of procedures and personnel are outlined, and inspection methods are discussed. A common shipyard problem, stray current protection, is discussed as is the health and safety of the work force. Supplementary nonmandatory appendices are provided for informational purposes.

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Table of Contents

Page No.

Personnel iii
Foreword iv
List of Tables vii
List of Figures vii

1. Materials 1
1.1 Steel Manufacturing Processes 1
1.2 Higher Strength Steels 5
1.3 Notch Toughness Properties of Steel 5
1.4 Notch Toughness of Weld Metal and Heat-Affected Zone 8
1.5 Fatigue 10
1.6 Specifications for Steel 13
1.7 Specifications for Welding Consumables 15
1.8 Selection of Materials 15
1.9 Weld Cracking 15
1.10 Service Performance of Welds 17
1.11 Welding of Higher Strength and Low-Temperature Service Steels 19
1.12 Welding of Clad Steel 19
1.13 Explosion Bonded Transition Joints 20

2. Welding Processes 20
2.1 Introduction 20
2.2 Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) 20
2.3 Submerged Arc Welding (SAW) 22
2.4 Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) 23
2.5 Flux Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) 25
2.6 Electroslag Welding (ESW) and Electrogas Welding (EGW) 27
2.7 Stud Welding 27
2.8 Thermit Welding 30
2.9 Removable Backing Materials for Welding 30

3. Design 31
3.1 Introduction 31
3.2 Main Strength Members 31
3.3 Secondary Strength Members 32
3.4 Design Details 32
3.5 Details for Manual Welding 35

4. Hull Construction 43
4.1 Introduction 43
4.2 Preparation of Material 43
4.3 Erection and Fitting 44
4.4 Welding Sequence 46
4.5 Weld Distortion 46
4.6 Stress Relief 54
4.7 Preheat 57
4.8 Barge Construction for Inland Waterways 57

Page No.

5. Inspection and Qualification 60
5.1 Introduction 60
5.2 Welding Procedure Qualifications 60
5.3 Welder Qualification 60
5.4 Inspection Methods 61
5.5 Welding Defects 63
5.6 Repair of Defects 65
5.7 Air Carbon Arc Process 65

6. Stray Current Protection 67
6.1 Underwater Corrosion 67
6.2 Current Flow 67
6.3 Welding Equipment Requirements 67
6.4 Grounding (Work) Connections 67
6.5 Special Precautions 74

7. Safety 77
7.1 Introduction 77
7.2 Fumes and Gases 77
7.3 Radiation 77
7.4 Electrical Hazards 78
7.5 Fire Prevention 78
7.6 OSHA Regulations 79

Appendix A — Codes and Specifications 81

Appendix B — Glossary 83

Appendix C — Safety 89

Appendix D — Mill Plate Tests and Inspection Procedures 97

Alpha-Numerical Document Title Reference — by Source 106

AWS Marine Welding Document List ..... (Inside Back Cover)

List of Tables

Table		Page No.
1A	American Bureau of Shipping, Requirements for Ordinary Strength Hull Structural Steel, Grades A, B, D, E, DS, CS, 2 in. (51 mm) and Under	9
1B	American Bureau of Shipping, Requirements for Ordinary Strength Hull Structural Steel, Over 2 in. (51 mm)	10
2A	American Bureau of Shipping, Requirements for Higher Strength Hull Structural Steel, Grades AH32, DH32, EH32, AH36, DH36, and EH36, 2 in. (51 mm) and Under	11
2B	American Bureau of Shipping Requirements for Higher Strength Hull Structural Steel, Over 2 in. (51 mm)	12
2C	American Bureau of Shipping, Normalizing Heat Treatment Requirements for Higher Strength Hull Structural Steels	12
3	Thickness Limitations for ABS Steel Grades	14
4	Specifications for Filler Metals — Steel	16
5	Applicable Filler Metal (ABS Grade and AWS Classification) Base Plate Combinations	21
6	Carbon and Low Alloy Steel Solid or Composite Electrodes and Rods	26
7	Carbon and Low Alloy Steel Flux Cored Electrodes (Wires)	28
8	Equivalent Fillet Weld Leg Size Factors for Skewed T-Joints	43
9	Weld Shrink Allowances	55

List of Figures

Figure		Page No.
1	Schematic Temperature Versus Deformation Plot Showing Differences Between Conventional Hot-Rolling and Control-Rolling	5
2A	Standard Charpy V-Notch Test Specimen	7
2B	Typical Charpy V-Notch Transition Temperature Curve for ABS Grade D Steel	7
3	Typical Charpy V-Notch Transition Temperature Curves for Several Grades of Steel	8
4	Tempering Passes	19
5	Typical Detail for Groove Welding Clad Plating	20
6	One Type of Gravity Feed Welding	22
7	Typical Joint Details and Backing Material Positioning for One-Side Submerged Arc Welding	24
8	Automatic Fillet Welding of Stiffeners to Plate Panel — Welds are Being Made Simultaneously on Both Sides of Stiffener	25
9	Vertical Electroslag and Electrogas Welding	29
10	Consumable Guide Tube Welding	30
11	Typical Joint Details for One-Side Welding	31
12	Most Highly Stressed Areas of Hull Girder	32
13	Load-Elongation and Transition Temperature Curves for Specimens With Oxygen-Cut Edges	33
14	Ending of Bulwark Fashion Plate Welded to Top of Sheerstrake	34
15	Original Design of Hatch Corner on Liberty Ship	35
16	Design of Hatch Corner on Victory Ship	35

Page No.

17 Typical Hatch Corner in Way of Container Guides on Container Ship 36
18 Typical Elliptical Hatch Corner 36
19 Bilge Keel Endings 36
20 Stress Concentration at Intersecting Planes Eased by Brackets 37
21 Typical Weld Details for Welding From One Side Only, Permanent Backing 38
22 Two Methods of Edge Preparation for Groove Welds Near Plate Laps 39
23 Transition From Riveting to Welding in Flush Seam 40
24 Transition From Riveting to Welding in Lap Seam 40
25 Welded Water- or Oil-Stops at Intersecting Members 41
26 Welded Stops at Riveted Seam Lap 41
27 Scallops 42
28 Details for Skewed T-Joints 42
29 Typical Strongbacks 45
30 Cutout of Member to Permit Passage of Inboard Sliding Shoe and Cables 46
31 Correction of Poor Fit-Up 47
32 Welding Sequence at Intersection of Butt and Seam 48
33 Welding Sequence for Plate Butt and Adjacent Seams 48
34 Typical Welding Sequence For Plate Butts and Seams Where Butts are Staggered 49
35 Typical Welding Sequence for Plate Butts and Seams Where Butts are in Line 49
36 Typical Welding Sequence for Plate Butt and Adjacent Seams Where Internal Framing is Attached 50
37 Typical Welding Sequence for Large Subassembled Plate Panels 50
38 Welding Sequence for Side Shell Plate Repair 50
39 Closure of Small and Large Openings 51
40 Residual Welding Stresses 52
41 Typical Distortion of Welded Joints 53
42 Angular Deflection Due to Welding Stiffeners to Plate (The Washboard Effect) 53
43 Angular Distortion Tendencies in Making Groove Welds 53
44 Natural Buckling Deflection 53
45 Permissible Unfairness in Steel Welded Structures as Used for Guidance by U.S. Navy 56
46 Control of Distortion in Thin Plate By Intermittent Welding 56
47 Coil Storage (Top) and Uncoiling Operation (Bottom) 58
48 Barge Construction Showing a Side Shell Unit (at right) in Horizontal Position Ready to be Erected Into Final Vertical Position 59
49 Typical Weldment Cracks 64
50 Air Carbon Arc Torch 66
51 Air Carbon Arc Torch Mounted on Carriage for Flat Work 68
52 Potential Source of Direct Currents Causing Corrosion Due to Accidental or Unintentional Ground on Vessel 68
53 Equivalent Circuit for Improperly Connected Generator or Rectifier 68
54 Nomograph for Copper Ground (Work Lead) Wire Size 69
55 Nomograph for Copper Electrode Lead Cable Size 70
56 Hookup for Single Ship at Pier 71
57 Hookup for Two Ships at Pier 72
58 Hookup for Ships Afloat (Sheet 1 of 2 Sheets) 73
59 Hookup for Ships Afloat (Sheet 2 of 2 Sheets) 73
60 Hookup for Ship in Floating Docks or ARD or LSD 74
61 Hookup for Ships in Dry or Graving Dock 75
62 Grounding (Work Lead) Connections on Steel Surface Ships 76

Appendix D

D-1 Dynamic Tear Test Specimen, Anvil Supports and Striker 99
D-2 Tensile Coupon Sampling 100
D-3 Yield Stress Defined 100

Page No.

D-4 Allowable Reduction in Tensile Coupon Elongation if Coupon Thickness is Less Than 5/16 Inch or More Than 3-1/2 Inch 100
D-5 Charpy Coupon Testing 101
D-6 Drop-Weight Test Setup to Determine Nil-Ductility (ASTM 208) 102
D-7 Drop Weight Tear Test (ASTM E436) 103
D-8 ASTM A770 Through Thickness Tensile Coupons 103
D-9 UT A435 Minimum Acceptance Criteria and Marking Requirement 105
D-10 A578 Minimum Acceptance Criteria and Marking Requirement 105

Guide for
Steel Hull Welding

1. Materials

This section deals with the manufacture and heat treating of steel, properties of steel, specifications for steel and welding consumables, and the weldability of steel.[1]

1.1 Steel Manufacturing Processes. Ship steel is made primarily in basic oxygen furnaces (BOF), open-hearth furnaces, and electric furnaces. There are only a few open-hearth furnaces operating today. Electric furnaces are used to make high-alloy specialty steels, steels for castings, and in conjunction with continuous casters they are used to make small to medium sized shapes and some flat rolled products.

1.1.1 Plates and Shapes. Plates are rolled in one of three types of rolling mills to produce sheared plates, universal mill plates, and continuous strip.

Sheared plates are rolled on mills which have horizontal rolls only, and are produced with irregular edges and ends which must be cut or sheared on all sides to produce a rectangular plate. Sheared plates are rolled in both directions by rotating the slab at the roughing stand of the mill. This process, called *cross rolling*, provides the plate with more uniform longitudinal and transverse properties, and sheared plates are usually specified where stringent mechanical properties are required.

Universal mill plates are rolled on mills with both horizontal and vertical rolls. The vertical rolls provide the plate with a rolled edge which does not require cutting to establish its width. Universal mill plates are not cross-rolled, and as a result, the plates may have slightly lower ductility in the transverse direction. These plates are used where a finished edge is desirable.

Continuous strip mill plates are made on a hot strip mill and can be furnished in coils or as flat rectangular products. These plates are used primarily for structural applications, cold-formed shapes, or on automated barge construction lines. Hot strip mill plates may have directional properties between those of the sheared mill and universal mill products.

Structural shapes are usually rolled on a mill similar to a universal plate mill.

1.1.2 Chemistry. Steel is essentially a combination of iron, manganese and carbon. The carbon content normally ranges between 0.05–1.00%, while the manganese content range is 0.25–1.00%. Many other elements are added in relatively small amounts to vary the mechanical characteristics of the steel.

Plate steels generally fall in the category of either a carbon steel or an alloy steel. Carbon steels comprise those grades where no minimum content is specified or required for aluminum, boron, chromium, cobalt, columbium (niobium), molybdenum, nickel, titanium, tungsten, vanadium, or zirconium, or any other element added to obtain a desired alloying effect. When specified, minimum copper does not exceed 0.40%. The maximum content specified for any of the following elements shall not exceed the percentages noted: manganese 1.65, silicon 0.60, copper 0.60.

Alloy steels comprise those grades which exceed the above limits, plus any grade to which any element other than those mentioned above is added for the purpose of achieving a specific alloying effect. Carbon steels usually have a lower base price than alloy steels and therefore are much more widely applied.

For structural applications, plates normally do not exceed 0.30% carbon and 1.50% manganese.

1. Some of the information contained in this section comes from the following sources:

American Bureau of Shipping. *Rules for building and classing steel vessels*. Paraus, NJ: American Bureau of Shipping, 1990.

Bethlehem Steel Corp., *Plate selection guide, Book 1*. Bethlehem, PA: Bethlehem Steel Corporation, 1985.