Chapter 22

Pavement materials: Aggregates

22.1 Overview

Aggregate is a collective term for the mineral materials such as sand, gravel, and crushed stone that are used with a binding medium (such as water, bitumen, Portland cement, lime, etc.) to form compound materials (such as bituminous concrete and Portland cement concrete). By volume, aggregate generally accounts for 92 to 96 percent of Bituminous concrete and about 70 to 80 percent of Portland cement concrete. Aggregate is also used for base and sub-base courses for both flexible and rigid pavements. Aggregates can either be natural or manufactured. Natural aggregates are generally extracted from larger rock formations through an open excavation (quarry). Extracted rock is typically reduced to usable sizes by mechanical crushing. Manufactured aggregate is often a bye product of other manufacturing industries. The requirements of the aggregates in pavement are also discussed in this chapter.

22.2 Desirable properties

22.2.1 Strength

The aggregates used in top layers are subjected to (i) Stress action due to traffic wheel load, (ii) Wear and tear, (iii) crushing. For a high quality pavement, the aggregates should posses high resistance to crushing, and to withstand the stresses due to traffic wheel load.

22.2.2 Hardness

The aggregates used in the surface course are subjected to constant rubbing or abrasion due to moving traffic. The aggregates should be hard enough to resist the abrasive action caused by the movements of traffic. The abrasive action is severe when steel tyred vehicles moves over the aggregates exposed at the top surface.

22.2.3 Toughness

Resistance of the aggregates to impact is termed as toughness. Aggregates used in the pavement should be able to resist the effect caused by the jumping of the steel tyred wheels from one particle to another at different levels causes severe impact on the aggregates.

22.2.4 Shape of aggregates

Aggregates which happen to fall in a particular size range may have rounded, cubical, angular, flaky or elongated particles. It is evident that the flaky and elongated particles will have less strength and durability when compared with cubical, angular or rounded particles of the same aggregate. Hence too flaky and too much elongated aggregates should be avoided as far as possible.

22.2.5 Adhesion with bitumen

The aggregates used in bituminous pavements should have less affinity with water when compared with bituminous materials, otherwise the bituminous coating on the aggregate will be stripped off in presence of water.

22.2.6 Durability

The property of aggregates to withstand adverse action of weather is called soundness. The aggregates are subjected to the physical and chemical action of rain and bottom water, impurities there-in and that of atmosphere, hence it is desirable that the road aggregates used in the construction should be sound enough to withstand the weathering action

22.2.7 Freedom from deleterious particles

Specifications for aggregates used in bituminous mixes usually require the aggregates to be clean, tough and durable in nature and free from excess amount of flat or elongated pieces, dust, clay balls and other objectionable material. Similarly aggregates used in Portland cement concrete mixes must be clean and free from deleterious substances such as clay lumps, chert, silt and other organic impurities.

22.3 Aggregate tests

In order to decide the suitability of the aggregate for use in pavement construction, following tests are carried out:

- Crushing test
- Abrasion test
- Impact test
- Soundness test
- Shape test
- Specific gravity and water absorption test
- Bitumen adhesion test

22.3.1 Crushing test

One of the model in which pavement material can fail is by crushing under compressive stress. A test is standardized by IS:2386 part-IV and used to determine the crushing strength of aggregates. The aggregate crushing value provides a relative measure of resistance to crushing under gradually applied crushing load. The test consists of subjecting the specimen of aggregate in standard mould to a compression test under standard load conditions (Figure 22:1). Dry aggregates passing through 12.5 mm sieves and retained 10 mm sieves are filled in a cylindrical measure of 11.5 mm diameter and 18 cm height in three layers. Each layer is tampered 25 times with at standard tamping rod. The test sample is weighed and placed in the test cylinder in three layers each layer being tampered again. The specimen is subjected to a compressive load of 40 tonnes gradually applied at the rate of 4 tonnes per minute. Then crushed aggregates are then sieved through 2.36 mm sieve and weight of passing material (W_2) is expressed as percentage of the weight of the total sample (W_1) which is the aggregate crushing value.

$$\text{Aggregate crushing value} = \frac{W_1}{W_2} \times 100$$

A value less than 10 signifies an exceptionally strong aggregate while above 35 would normally be regarded as weak aggregates.

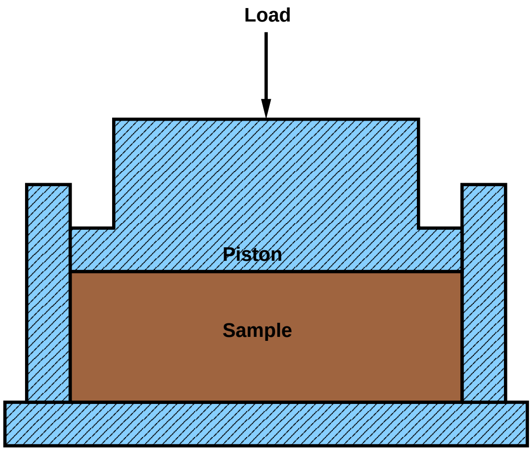

Figure 22:1: Crushing test setup

22.3.2 Abrasion test

Abrasion test is carried out to test the hardness property of aggregates and to decide whether they are suitable for different pavement construction works. Los Angeles abrasion test is a preferred one for carrying out the hardness property and has been standardized in India (IS:2386 part-IV). The principle of Los Angeles abrasion test is to find the percentage wear due to relative rubbing action between the aggregate and steel balls used as abrasive charge.

Los Angeles machine consists of circular drum of internal diameter 700 mm and length 520 mm mounted on horizontal axis enabling it to be rotated (see Figure 22:2). An abrasive charge consisting of cast iron spherical balls of 48 mm diameters and weight 340-445 g is placed in the cylinder along with the aggregates. The number of the abrasive spheres varies according to the grading of the sample. The quantity of aggregates to be used depends upon the gradation and usually ranges from 5-10 kg. The cylinder is then locked and rotated at the speed of 30-33 rpm for a total of 500 -1000 revolutions depending upon the gradation of aggregates.

After specified revolutions, the material is sieved through 1.7 mm sieve and passed fraction is expressed as percentage total weight of the sample. This value is called Los Angeles abrasion value.

A maximum value of 40 percent is allowed for WBM base course in Indian conditions. For bituminous concrete, a maximum value of 35 is specified.

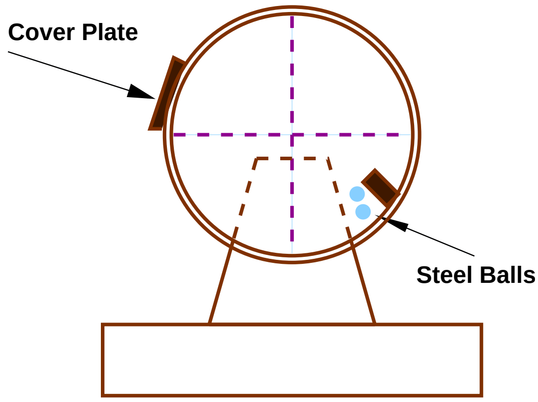

Figure 22:2: Los Angeles abrasion test setup

22.3.3 Impact test

The aggregate impact test is carried out to evaluate the resistance to impact of aggregates. Aggregates passing 12.5 mm sieve and retained on 10 mm sieve is filled in a cylindrical steel cup of internal dia 10.2 mm and depth 5 cm which is attached to a metal base of impact testing machine. The material is filled in 3 layers where each layer is tamped for 25 number of blows. Metal hammer of weight 13.5 to 14 Kg is arranged to drop with a free fall of 38.0 cm by vertical guides and the test specimen is subjected to 15 number of blows. The crushed aggregate is allowed to pass through 2.36 mm IS sieve. And the impact value is measured as percentage of aggregates passing sieve (W_2) to the total weight of the sample (W_1).

$$\text{Aggregate impact value} = \frac{W_1}{W_2} \times 100$$

Aggregates to be used for wearing course, the impact value shouldn't exceed 30 percent. For bituminous macadam the maximum permissible value is 35 percent. For Water bound macadam base courses the maximum permissible value defined by IRC is 40 percent

22.3.4 Soundness test

Soundness test is intended to study the resistance of aggregates to weathering action, by conducting accelerated weathering test cycles. The Porous aggregates subjected to freezing and thawing are likely to disintegrate prematurely. To ascertain the durability of such aggregates, they are subjected to an accelerated soundness test as specified in IS:2386 part-V. Aggregates of specified size are subjected to cycles of alternate wetting in a saturated solution of either sodium sulphate or magnesium sulphate for 16 - 18 hours and then dried in oven at $105 - 110^oC$ to a constant weight. After five cycles, the loss in weight of aggregates is determined by sieving

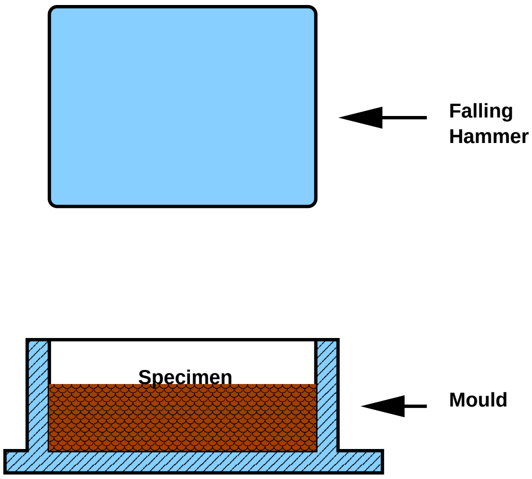

Figure 22:3: Impact test setup

out all undersized particles and weighing. And the loss in weight should not exceed 12 percent when tested with sodium sulphate and 18 percent with magnesium sulphate solution.

22.3.5 Shape tests

The particle shape of the aggregate mass is determined by the percentage of flaky and elongated particles in it. Aggregates which are flaky or elongated are detrimental to higher workability and stability of mixes.

The flakiness index is defined as the percentage by weight of aggregate particles whose least dimension is less than 0.6 times their mean size. Test procedure had been standardized in India (IS:2386 part-I)

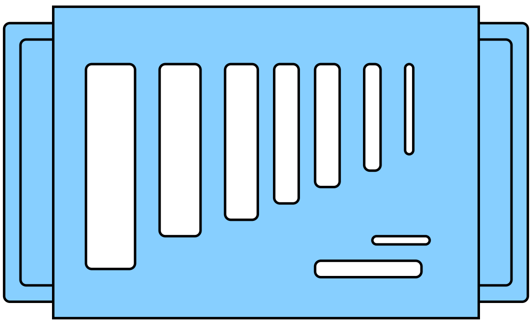

Figure 22:4: Flakiness gauge

The elongation index of an aggregate is defined as the percentage by weight of particles whose greatest dimension (length) is 1.8 times their mean dimension. This test is applicable to aggregates larger than 6.3 mm. This test is also specified in (IS:2386 Part-I). However there are no recognized limits for the elongation index.

22.3.6 Specific Gravity and water absorption

The specific gravity and water absorption of aggregates are important properties that are required for the design of concrete and bituminous mixes. The specific gravity of a solid is the ratio of its mass to that of an equal

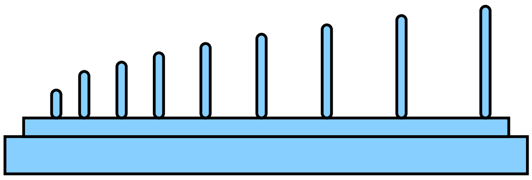

Figure 22:5: Elongation gauge

volume of distilled water at a specified temperature. Because the aggregates may contain water-permeable voids, so two measures of specific gravity of aggregates are used: *apparent* specific gravity and *bulk* specific gravity.

- Apparent Specific Gravity, G_{app}, is computed on the basis of the net volume of aggregates i.e the volume excluding water-permeable voids. Thus

$$G_{app} = \frac{M_D/V_N}{W} \tag{22.1}$$

  where, M_D is the dry mass of the aggregate, V_N is the net volume of the aggregates excluding the volume of the absorbed matter, W is the density of water.

- Bulk Specific Gravity, G_{bulk}, is computed on the basis of the total volume of aggregates including water permeable voids.Thus

$$G_{bulk} = \frac{M_D/V_B}{W} \tag{22.2}$$

  where, V_B is the total volume of the aggregates including the volume of absorbed water.

- Water absorption, The difference between the apparent and bulk specific gravities is nothing but the water-permeable voids of the aggregates. We can measure the volume of such voids by weighing the aggregates dry and in a saturated, surface dry condition, with all permeable voids filled with water. The difference of the above two is M_W. M_W is the weight of dry aggregates minus weight of aggregates saturated surface dry condition. Thus

$$\text{water absorption} = \frac{\mathrm{M_W}}{\mathrm{M_D}} \times 100 \tag{22.3}$$

  The specific gravity of aggregates normally used in road construction ranges from about 2.5 to 2.9. Water absorption values ranges from 0.1 to about 2.0 percent for aggregates normally used in road surfacing.

22.3.7 Bitumen adhesion test

Bitumen adheres well to all normal types of road aggregates provided they are dry and free from dust. In the absence of water there is practically no adhesion problem of bituminous construction. Adhesion problem occurs when the aggregate is wet and cold. This problem can be dealt with by removing moisture from the aggregate by drying and increasing the mixing temperature. Further, the presence of water causes stripping of binder from the coated aggregates. This problems occur when bitumen mixture is permeable to water. Several laboratory tests are conducted to arbitrarily determine the adhesion of bitumen binder to an aggregate in the presence of water. Static immersion test is one specified by IRC and is quite simple. The principle of the test is by immersing aggregate fully coated with binder in water maintained at 40^0C temperature for 24 hours. IRC has specified maximum stripping value of aggregates should not exceed 5%.

Property of aggregate	**Type of Test**	**Test Method**
Crushing strength	Crushing test	IS : 2386 (part 4) -1963
Hardness	Los Angeles abrasion test	IS : 2386 (Part 5)-1963
Toughness	Aggregate impact test	IS : 2386 (Part 4)-1963
Durability	Soundness test- accelerated durability test	IS : 2386 (Part 5)-1963
Shape factors	Shape test	IS : 2386 (Part 1)-1963
Specific gravity and porosity	Specific gravity test and water absorption test	IS : 2386 (Part 3)-1963
Adhesion to bitumen	Stripping value of aggregate	IS : 6241-1971

Table 22:1: Tests for Aggregates with IS codes

22.4 Summary

Aggregates influence, to a great extent, the load transfer capability of pavements. Hence it is essential that they should be thoroughly tested before using for construction. Not only that aggregates should be strong and durable, they should also possess proper shape and size to make the pavement act monolithically. Aggregates are tested for strength, toughness, hardness, shape, and water absorption.

22.5 Problems

1. IRC has specified the maximum value of stripping value of bitumen not to exceed
   (a) 2%
   (b) 3%
   (c) 4%
   (d) 5%
2. Which property of aggregate is tested by conducting aggregate impact test?
   (a) Durability
   (b) Hardness
   (c) Toughness
   (d) Porosity

22.6 Solutions

1. IRC has specified the maximum value of stripping value of bitumen not to exceed
   (a) 2%$\checkmark$
   (b) 3%
   (c) 4%
   (d) 5%

2. Which property of aggregate is tested by conducting aggregate impact test?
    (a) Durability
    (b) Hardness
    (c) Toughness$\surd$
    (d) Porosity