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**Vibration and shock — Experimental
determination of mechanical mobility —**

Part 5:

Measurements using impact excitation with
an exciter which is not attached to the
structure

*Vibrations et chocs — Détermination expérimentale de la mobilité
mécanique —*

*Partie 5: Mesurages à partir d'une excitation par choc appliquée par un
excitateur non solidaire de la structure*



Reference number
ISO 7626-5:1994(E)

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO 7626-5 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 108, *Mechanical vibration and shock*.

ISO 7626 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Vibration and shock* — *Experimental determination of mechanical mobility*:

- Part 1: *Basic definitions and transducers*
- Part 2: *Measurements using single-point translation excitation with an attached vibration exciter*
- Part 3: *Mobility measurements using rotational excitation at a single point*
- Part 4: *Measurements of the entire mobility matrix using attached exciters*
- Part 5: *Measurements using impact excitation with an exciter which is not attached to the structure*

Annexes A and B of this part of ISO 7626 are for information only.

Introduction

General introduction to ISO 7626 on mobility measurement

Dynamic characteristics of structures can be determined as a function of frequency from mobility measurements or measurements of the related frequency-response functions, known as accelerance and dynamic compliance. Each of these frequency-response functions is the phasor of the motion response at a point on a structure due to a unit force (or moment) excitation. The magnitude and the phase of these functions are frequency dependent.

Accelerance and dynamic compliance differ from mobility only in that the motion response is expressed in terms of acceleration or displacement, respectively, instead of in terms of velocity. In order to simplify the various parts of ISO 7626, only the term "mobility" will be used. It is understood that all test procedures and requirements described are also applicable to the determination of accelerance and dynamic compliance.

Typical applications for mobility measurements are for:

- a) predicting the dynamic response of structures to known or assumed input excitation;
- b) determining the modal properties of a structure (natural frequencies, mode shapes and damping ratios);
- c) predicting the dynamic interaction of interconnected structures;
- d) checking the validity and improving the accuracy of mathematical models of structures;
- e) determining dynamic properties (i.e. the complex modulus of elasticity) of materials in pure or composite forms.

For some applications, a complete description of the dynamic characteristics may be required using measurements of translational forces and motions along three mutually perpendicular axes as well as measurements of moments and rotational motions about these three axes. This set of measurements results in a 6×6 mobility matrix for each location of interest. For N locations on a structure, the system thus has an overall mobility matrix of size $6N \times 6N$.

For most practical applications, it is not necessary to know the entire $6N \times 6N$ matrix. Often it is sufficient to measure the driving-point mobility and a few transfer mobilities by exciting with a force at a single point in a single direction and measuring the translational response motions at key points on the structure. In other applications, only rotational mobilities may be of interest.

In order to simplify the use of the various parts of ISO 7626 in the various mobility measurement tasks encountered in practice, ISO 7626 will be published as a set of five separate parts:

ISO 7626-1 covers basic definitions and transducers. The information in ISO 7626-1 is common to most mobility measurement tasks.

ISO 7626-2 covers mobility measurements using single-point translational excitation with an attached exciter.

ISO 7626-3 covers mobility measurements using single-point rotational excitation with an attached exciter. This information is primarily intended for rotor system rotational resonance predictions.

ISO 7626-4 covers measurements of the entire mobility matrix using attached exciters. This includes the translational, rotational and combination terms required for the 6×6 matrix for each location on the structure.

ISO 7626-5 (this part of ISO 7626) covers mobility measurements using impact excitation with an exciter which is not attached to the structure.

Mechanical mobility is defined as the frequency-response function formed by the ratio of the phasor of the translational or rotational response velocity to the phasor of the applied force or moment excitation. If the response is measured with an accelerometer, conversion to velocity is required to obtain the mobility. Alternatively, the ratio of acceleration to force, known as accelerance, may be used to characterize a structure. In other cases, dynamic compliance, the ratio of displacement to force, may be used.

NOTE 1 Historically, frequency-response functions of structures have often been expressed in terms of the *reciprocal* of one of the above-named dynamic characteristics. The arithmetic reciprocal of mechanical mobility has often been called mechanical impedance. It should be noted, however, that this is misleading because the arithmetic reciprocal of mobility does *not*, in general, represent any of the elements of the impedance matrix of the structure. Mobility test data cannot be used directly as part of an analytic impedance model of the structure. To achieve compatibility of the data and the model, the impedance matrix of the model must be inverted to a mobility matrix, or vice versa. This point is elaborated upon in annex A of ISO 7626-1:1986.

Introduction to this part of ISO 7626

Impact excitation has become a popular method for measuring the frequency response of structures because of its inherent speed and relatively low cost to implement. However, the accuracy of mobility measurements made by using impact excitation is highly dependent upon both the characteristics of the test structure and on the experimental techniques employed. With impact excitation, it may be difficult or impossible in certain cases to obtain the accuracy which is attainable using continuous excitation with an attached exciter, and the impact method carries an increased danger of gross measurement errors. (See ref. [7]). In spite of these limitations, impact testing can be an extremely useful excitation technique when applied properly.

This part of ISO 7626 provides a guide to the use of impact excitation for mobility measurements. Accurate mobility measurements always require careful attention to equipment selection and to the measurement techniques employed; these factors are especially important when using impact excitation. Furthermore, the characteristics of the test structure, especially its degree of nonlinearity, will limit the accuracy which can be achieved. Subclause 4.2 describes these limitations on the use of impact excitation.

Because the exciter is not attached to the structure, this method makes it practical to measure a series of transfer mobilities of a structure by moving the excitation successively to each desired point on the structure, while the response motion transducer remains at a single fixed location and direction. Due to the principle of dynamic reciprocity, such measurements should be equal, assuming linearity, to the results obtained using an attached exciter at the same fixed location and direction with the response transducer relocated to each desired point on the structure. However, it may be difficult to impact the structure in all desired directions at certain locations, and in such cases it may be more practical to use impact excitation at the fixed location and direction and relocate a multi-axis response transducer to the desired response locations.

NOTE 2 The use of a multi-axis response transducer at a fixed location does not provide information about the multi-axis response at other locations. For example, if a fixed response transducer is used in performing measurements for a modal test, and if the impact is applied in only a single direction at each point, then only the mode shape components in that direction are obtained.

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Vibration and shock — Experimental determination of mechanical mobility —

Part 5:

Measurements using impact excitation with an exciter which is not attached to the structure

1 Scope

This part of ISO 7626 specifies procedures for measuring mechanical mobility and other frequency-response functions of structures excited by means of a translational impulsive force generated by an exciter which is not attached to the structure under test.

It is applicable to the measurement of mobility, accelerance or dynamic compliance, either as a driving point measurement or as a transfer measurement, using impact excitation. Other excitation methods, such as step relaxation and transient random, lead to signal-processing requirements similar to those of impact data. However, such methods are outside the scope of this part of ISO 7626 because they involve the use of an exciter which is attached to the structure.

The signal analysis methods covered are all based on the discrete Fourier transform. This restriction in scope is based solely on the wide availability of equipment which implements these methods and on the large base of experience in using these methods. It is not intended to exclude the use of other methods currently under development.

Impact excitation is also widely used to obtain uncalibrated frequency-response information. For example, a quick impact test which obtains approximate natural frequencies and mode shapes can be quite helpful in planning a random or sinusoidal test for accurate mobility measurements. However, these uses of impact excitation to obtain qualitative results should not be confused with its use for mobility measurements.

This part of ISO 7626 is limited to the use of impact excitation techniques for making accurate mobility measurements.

2 Normative references

The following standards contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this part of ISO 7626. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this part of ISO 7626 are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards indicated below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 2041:1990, *Vibration and shock — Vocabulary*.

ISO 7626-1:1986, *Vibration and shock — Experimental determination of mechanical mobility — Part 1: Basic definitions and transducers*.

ISO 7626-2:1990, *Vibration and shock — Experimental determination of mechanical mobility — Part 2: Measurements using single-point translation excitation with an attached vibration exciter*.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this part of ISO 7626, the definitions given in ISO 2041 apply. For convenience, the most important definitions used in this part of ISO 7626 are given below.

3.1 frequency-response function: The frequency-dependent ratio of the motion-response phasor to the phasor of the excitation force.

NOTES

3 Frequency-response functions are properties of linear dynamic systems which do not depend on the type of excitation function. Excitation can be harmonic, random or transient functions of time. The test results obtained with one type of excitation can thus be used for predicting the response of the system to any other type of excitation.

4 Linearity of the system is a condition which, in practice, will be met only approximately, depending on the type of system and on the magnitude of the input. Care has to be taken to avoid nonlinear effects, particularly when applying impulse excitation. Structures which are known to be nonlinear (for example, certain riveted structures) should not be tested with impulse excitation and great care is required when using random excitation for testing such structures.

5 Motion may be expressed in terms of either velocity, acceleration or displacement; the corresponding frequency-response function designations are mobility, accelerance and dynamic compliance or impedance, effective mass and dynamic stiffness, respectively.

[ISO 2041, 1.48]

6 Assuming linearity, the frequency-response function may be defined equivalently for transient excitation as the complex ratio of the Fourier transform of the motion response to the Fourier transform of the excitation force. In actual practice, the discrete Fourier transform (DFT) is used as an approximation of the continuous Fourier transform. The errors of this approximation can be reduced to levels below those of other measurement errors. Hence, the use of the DFT does not necessarily limit the accuracy of the measurement.

3.2 frequency range of interest: Span, in hertz, from the lowest frequency to the highest frequency at which mobility data are to be obtained in a given test series.

[ISO 2041, 1.49]

3.3 direct (mechanical) mobility; driving-point (mechanical) mobility, Y_{jj} : The complex ratio of velocity and force taken at the same point in a mechanical system during simple harmonic motion.

NOTES

7 Driving-point mobility is the frequency-response function formed by the ratio, in metres per newton second, of the velocity-response phasor at point j to the excitation force phasor applied at the same point with all other measurement points on the structure allowed to respond freely without any constraints other than those constraints which represent the normal support of the structure in its intended application.

8 The term "point" designates a location and a direction. The term "coordinate" has also been used with the same meaning as "point".

[ISO 2041, 1.51]

3.4 frequency-averaged mobility magnitude: The r.m.s. value of the ratio, in metres per newton second, of the magnitude of the velocity response at point i to the magnitude of the exciting force at the same point, averaged over specified frequency bands.

[ISO 2041, 1.52]

3.5 transfer (mechanical) mobility: The complex ratio of the velocity, taken at one point in a mechanical system, to the force, taken at another point in the same system, during simple harmonic motion.

NOTE 9 Transfer mobility is the frequency-response function formed by the ratio, in metres per newton second, of the velocity-response phasor at points i to the excitation force phasor applied at point j with all points other than j allowed to respond freely without any constraints other than those constraints which represent the normal support of the structure in its intended application.

[ISO 2041, 1.53]

3.6 energy spectral density: The power spectral density multiplied by the length, in seconds, of the record which is used in the spectrum calculation of a transient signal.

NOTE 10 This definition assumes that the transient signal is entirely contained within the record. This normalization is needed in order to obtain a spectral magnitude which is independent of the record length used in the finite Fourier transform.

4 General characteristics of impact measurements

4.1 General description

The instrumentation required for mobility measurements using impact excitation consists of an impactor with built-in force transducer, one or more motion-response transducers with their associated signal conditioners, and a digital Fourier transform analysis system or analyser having at least two simultaneous input channels. The instrumentation system is shown schematically in figure 1. This part of ISO 7626 provides information on the selection and use of these components.

The force and response signals from each impact are anti-aliasing filtered and then digitally sampled using

the transient capture mode of the analyser. Each of the resulting digital records should represent a single impact event. The discrete Fourier transform of each record is computed by the analyser. Frequency domain averaging of several frequency-response functions obtained from impacts at a given point may be performed to improve the estimate.

4.2 Advantages and limitations of impact excitation

Impact excitation offers the following intrinsic advantages compared with the use of an attached exciter:

- a) measurement speed;
- b) ease of installation;
- c) ease of relocating the excitation point;
- d) minimal structural loading by the exciter.

On the other hand, the following limitations of impact excitation must be taken into account:

- a) nonlinearity restrictions;
- b) signal-to-noise problems;
- c) limited frequency resolution;

- d) damping restrictions;
- e) dependance on operator skill.

These limitations are discussed in 4.2.1 to 4.2.5.

4.2.1 Nonlinearity restrictions

Mobility measurements on structures which exhibit a significant degree of nonlinearity will always demand special precautions. In such cases, the use of sinusoidal or random excitation with an attached exciter is preferred, if practical, instead of the impact-excitation technique.

With the impact-excitation technique, the energy needed to drive the response signal to a certain magnitude is put into the structure during a limited part of the time period used for analysis. Compared to sinusoidal or random excitation, the force of the impact pulse therefore has to be much larger and the effects of nonlinearity are therefore increased.

For measurements on systems with a significant degree of nonlinearity, it is very important to keep a record of the force used for the excitation and a record of the system response. In this aspect, the sinusoidal excitation techniques are preferable. If a hand-held hammer is used to generate the impacts, the individual force amplitudes may vary significantly. The repeatability of such a measurement will be poor for nonlinear systems.

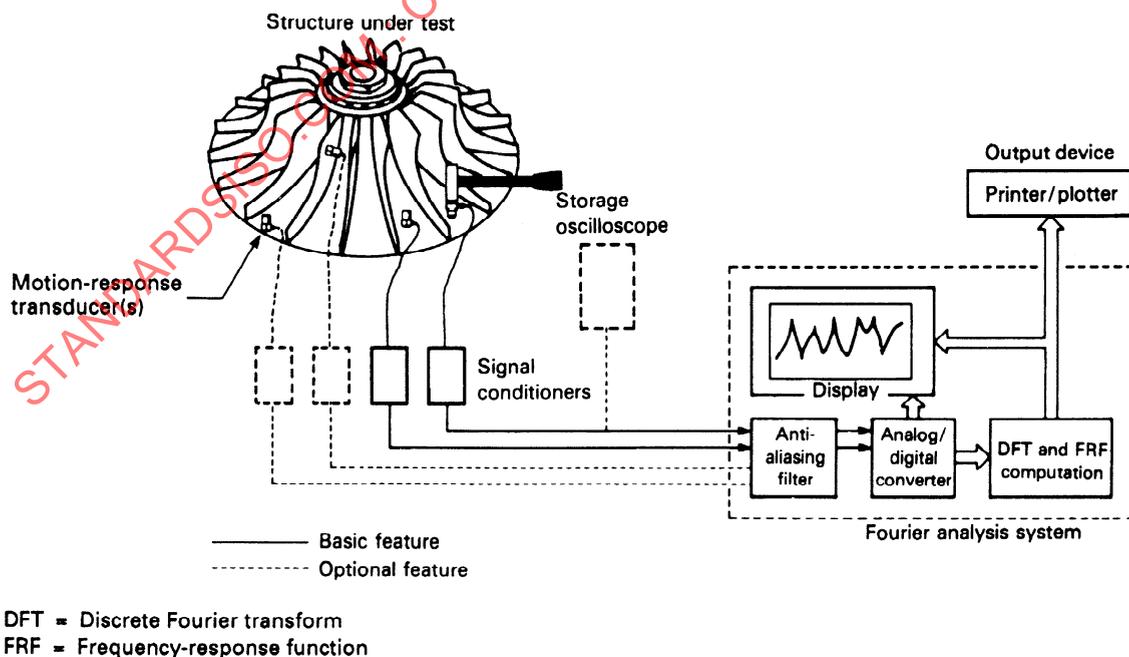


Figure 1 — Instrumentation block diagram for impact excitation

4.2.2 Signal-to-noise problems

Because the average signal levels are low compared with the peak levels, impact measurements require a very low noise testing environment and the maximum possible dynamic range in the measurement system. This requirement may rule out the use of current analog tape-recording techniques.

A significant noise problem can occur because the force signal duration is short compared with the total record length. This situation can result in the instrumentation electrical noise and the mechanically induced background noise having a mean square value that is significant compared with the mean square value of the input force. Such noise can be reduced by the windowing techniques described in 8.5.

4.2.3 Limited frequency resolution

The frequency increment, in hertz, which results from a discrete Fourier transform (including the case of a band-limited or "zoom" analysis) is equal to the reciprocal of the record length, in seconds. Because each record represents a single impact event, the record length is effectively limited to the time required for the impulse response of the structure to decay to the level of the background noise. Therefore, the frequency resolution attainable depends on both the response of the structure and the background noise level. In some cases, it may be impractical (and unnecessary) using impact excitation to achieve directly the frequency resolution specified in ISO 7626-2; however, accurate mobility values can be obtained at discrete frequencies with sufficiently fine resolution for most applications. If the test structure exhibits high modal density (i.e. multiple resonances within a narrow frequency band), it may be difficult to achieve sufficiently fine resolution for an accurate mobility measurement. In those cases, one of the steady-state excitation methods with "zoom" analysis is preferred.

By its very nature, the spectrum of an impact extends from d.c. to some upper frequency limit. (See clause 6.) This inability to band limit the excitation spectrum restricts the usefulness of "zoom" analysis for improving the frequency resolution of impact measurements, and it places further demands on the dynamic range of the measurement system. It also increases the danger of undetected overloads (clipping) in the measurement system due to high-amplitude out-of-band signals. See 6.3 and 8.4.

4.2.4 Damping restrictions

Impact excitation has limitations for testing heavily damped structures because the short duration of the

response signal leads to a trade-off between frequency resolution and background noise level, as discussed in 4.2.3. This limitation can also be understood as a manifestation of the inherently low average energy level for a given impact force magnitude. Heavily damped structures may require higher energy continuous excitation in order to balance their high internal energy dissipation characteristics and to produce sufficient response data for accurate measurement.

A different problem occurs if the structure has extremely light damping. The frequency-response functions of such a structure exhibit very sharp resonance peaks which will require high-resolution zoom measurements for accurate definition, as discussed in 4.2.3. The use of an exponential decay window can help by adding a known amount of artificial decay to the data. If windowing is used, the resulting mobility data shall be corrected, as described in 8.5 and annex A.

4.2.5 Dependence on operator skill

The accuracy of mobility measurements performed using a hand-held impact hammer depends on the ability of the operator to maintain the correct location and direction of impact. These effects can normally be held within acceptable limits if the impacts are applied carefully, but they may be significant if the test structure is small, requiring very fine spatial resolution.

Operator skill is also required in order to avoid impactor rebound; see 6.4.

5 Support of the structure under test

Mobility measurements may be performed on structures either in an ungrounded condition (freely suspended) or in a grounded condition (attached to one or more supports), depending on the objective of the test.

5.1 Ungrounded measurements

Ungrounded measurements employ a compliant suspension of the test structure. The magnitudes of all elements of the driving-point mobility matrix of the suspension, at its point(s) of attachment to the structure under test, should be at least ten times greater than the magnitudes of the corresponding elements of the mobility matrix of the structure at the same attachment point(s).

5.2 Grounded measurements

Grounded measurements employ a support of the test structure which is representative of its support in typical applications unless otherwise specified. A description of the support and attachment should be included in the test report.

6 Application of the excitation

6.1 Impactor design

A typical impactor consists of a rigid mass with a force transducer attached to one end and an impact tip attached to the opposite side of the force transducer, as shown schematically in figure 2. The tip stiffness and impactor mass shall be selected as described in 6.3, in order to achieve a force pulse of the desired duration and to avoid rebounds.

For small values of impactor mass, the impactor often takes the form of a hand-held hammer with interchangeable tips and masses. However, the accuracy obtained using a hand-held impactor depends on the

skill of the operator in maintaining the correct location and direction of impact. For small test structures, it may be necessary to provide a suitable mechanical device to guide the impactor to a repeatable location and direction on the structure. For testing large structures which require higher energy, the impactor may take the form of a large mass suspended from cables and either dropped or swung. Alternatively, a smaller mass may be accelerated to a high impact velocity by a spring, solenoid pneumatic actuator, or other means.

The area of the impact surface of the tip should be large enough to withstand the maximum force employed without permanent deformation of either the tip or the test structure. On the other hand, a small tip area may be necessary if very fine spatial resolution of the location is required. The velocity vector of the impactor at the moment of impact should be in line with the sensing axis of the force transducer and should be perpendicular to the surface of the test structure at the point of impact within 10° . It is generally easier to maintain the proper orientation if the impactor body is relatively long compared with its cross-sectional dimensions.

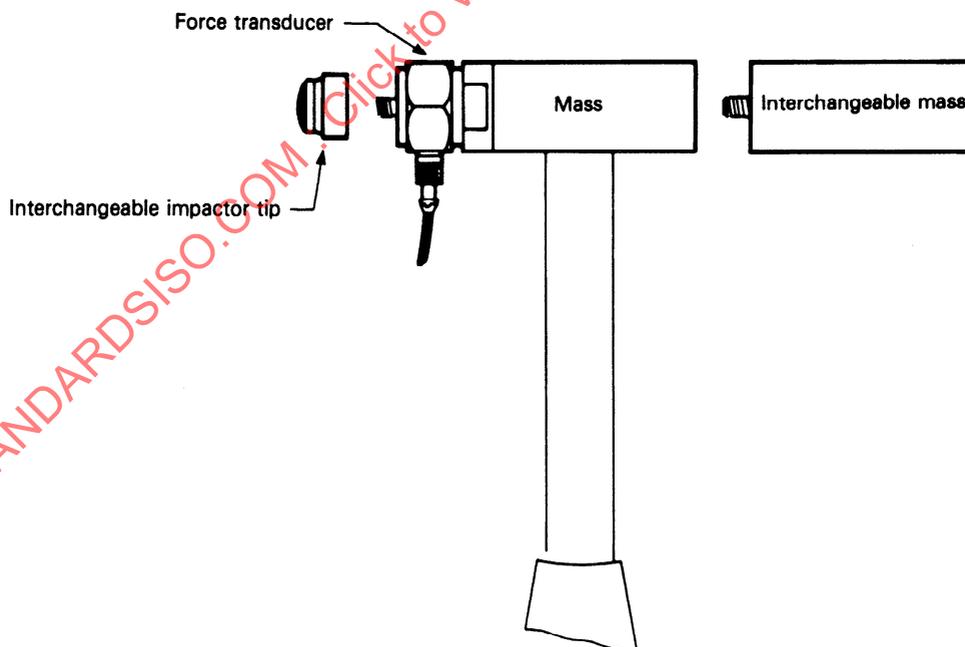


Figure 2 — Typical impactor

6.2 Force spectrum characteristics

A theoretical impulse of infinitesimal duration contains equal energy at all frequencies. However, the spectrum of any actual force pulse has a finite usable bandwidth which is inversely proportional to the duration of the pulse. This provides a useful means of concentrating the excitation energy below the maximum frequency of interest. In practice, the spectrum of a single force pulse typically has the form of a main lobe at low frequency followed by higher-frequency side-lobes whose magnitudes decrease rapidly with frequency. Figure 3 shows a force pulse and the corresponding energy spectral density. The usable frequency range of this pulse extends up to about 1 000 Hz, depending on the response characteristics of the structure under test.

NOTE 11 There is an inherent trade-off between time-domain resolution and frequency-domain resolution in the discrete Fourier transform. In order to obtain the maximum frequency resolution, the frequency range of the analyser should not extend beyond the maximum frequency of interest. Due to the sampling relationships of the discrete Fourier transform (see 8.3), the force waveform will be represented by only a few discrete samples in the digital record used by the Fourier analyser. The force waveform is also shaped by the anti-aliasing filter. These factors, which are necessary for accurate frequency-domain analysis, make the digital records ill-suited for monitoring the force waveform during impact measurements (unless the analysis bandwidth is increased to a frequency well above the usable frequency range of the force pulse). Figure 4 shows the same force pulse as figure 3, but low-pass filtered at 625 Hz. Note that the two energy densities show good agreement, although the digitized force waveform in figure 4 shows a considerably different shape and peak magnitude.

6.3 Control of the frequency range of excitation

In order to make optimum use of the dynamic range of the measurement system, it is desirable to limit the frequency range of excitation to the maximum frequency of interest. The excitation bandwidth is controlled by the tip stiffness and the impactor mass. The frequency range of a given impactor can be reduced either by decreasing the tip stiffness or by increasing the impactor mass.

The actual frequency range achieved also depends on the effective stiffness and mass of the test structure at the point of impact. Low structure stiffness limits

the increase in frequency range achievable by increasing the tip stiffness. In this case, a more effective method of increasing the frequency range of the excitation is to reduce the mass of the impactor.

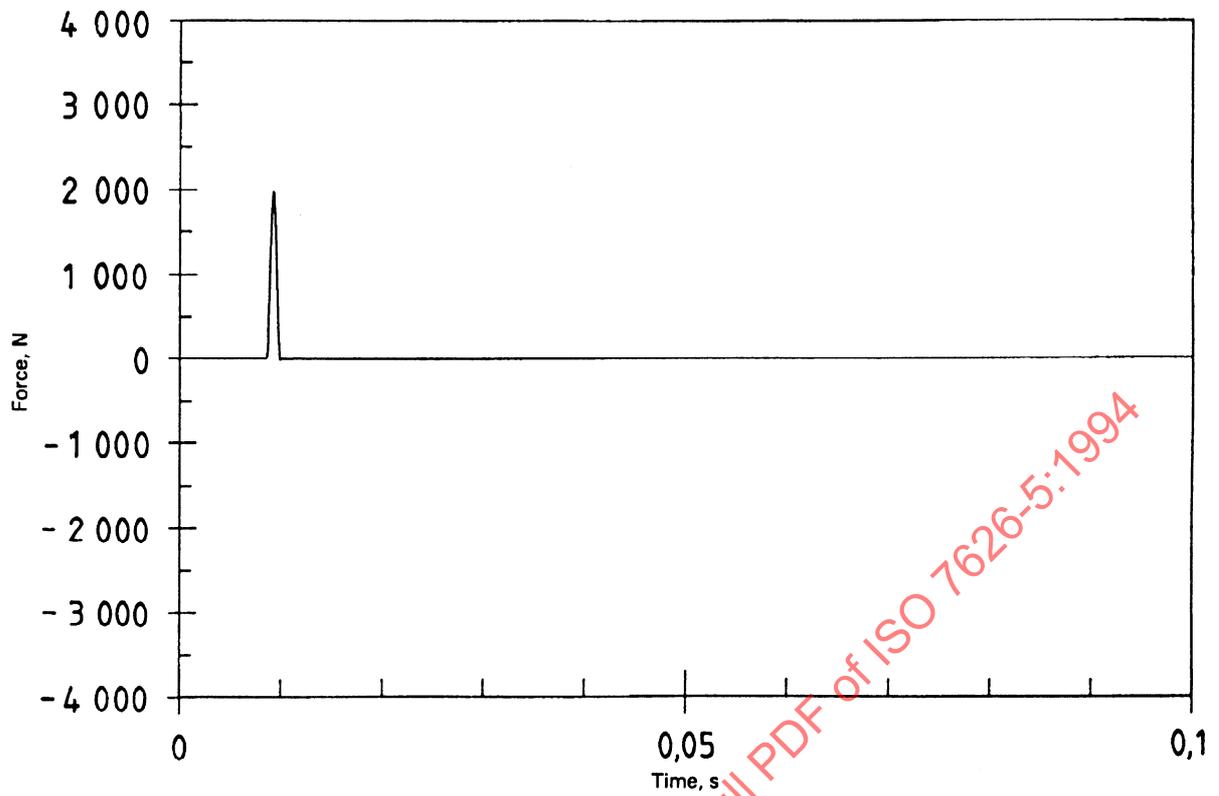
The force and response spectra should be checked for excessive energy above the frequency range of interest by using a force equal to the maximum likely to be employed during the test. The impactor characteristics should then be adjusted if necessary to achieve the desired frequency range.

6.4 Avoidance of impactor rebounds

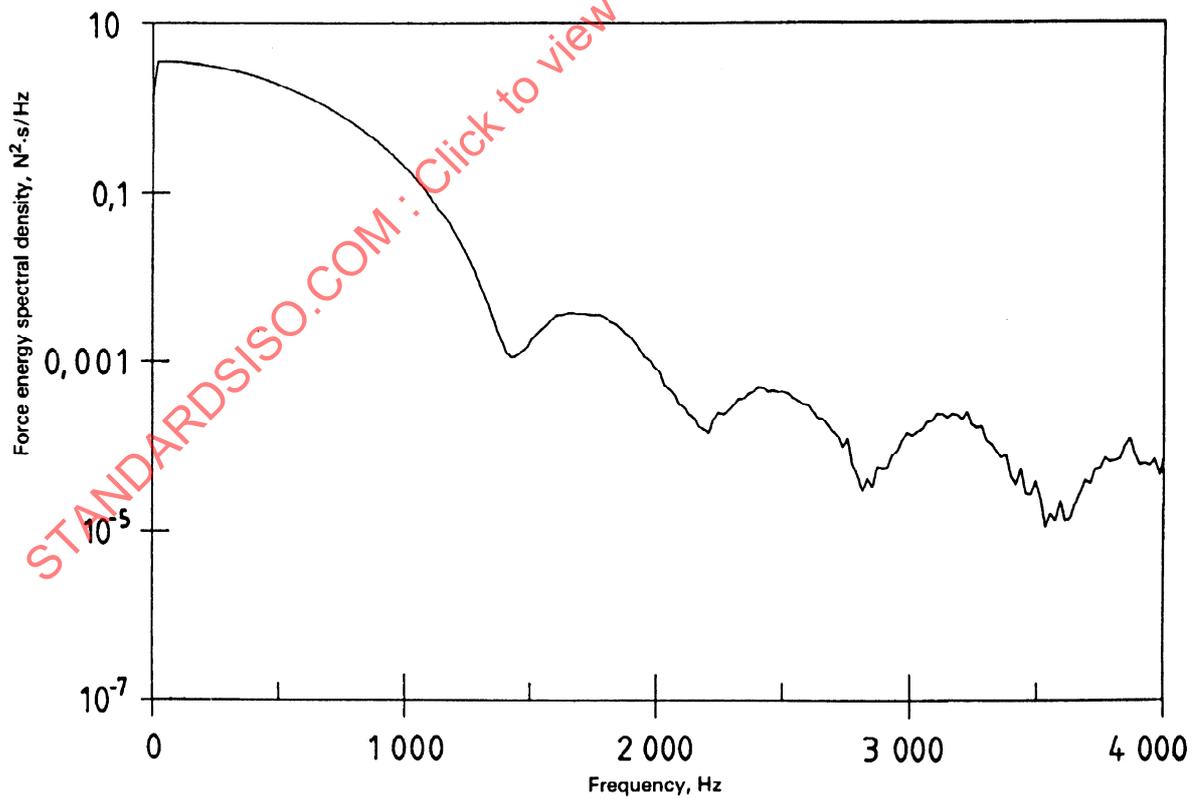
If more than a single impact occurs within the data record, the Fourier transforms of the pulses tend to cancel at certain frequencies, creating sharp notches in the force spectrum (see figure 5). This can cause significant errors in the mobility measurement at these frequencies, due to a low signal-to-noise ratio in the force spectrum. Even if the impact is applied very carefully, it may be impossible to avoid rebounds when exciting at a very responsive point on the test structure with a relatively massive impactor. The solution is to reduce the mass of the impactor; the tip stiffness should then be adjusted to maintain the desired frequency range of excitation.

If the second impact is small compared with the primary impact, the force spectrum may exhibit a slight ripple rather than deep notches. Moderate dips in the force spectrum can normally be tolerated. Multiple impacts are most easily detected in the frequency domain by checking the force spectrum at each impact location. It is also desirable to monitor the time-domain waveform; a storage-type oscilloscope may be used to observe the unfiltered force signal, so that secondary impacts will not be obscured by the anti-aliasing filter "ringing" from the primary impact.

WARNING — Never use a "force window" (see 8.5) to eliminate secondary impacts from the force record prior to Fourier processing. When using a force window to reduce noise in the force signal, take care that it does not mask multiple impacts which actually occur. The response will still include the effects of the multiple impacts, thus resulting in an erroneous estimate of the frequency response function.

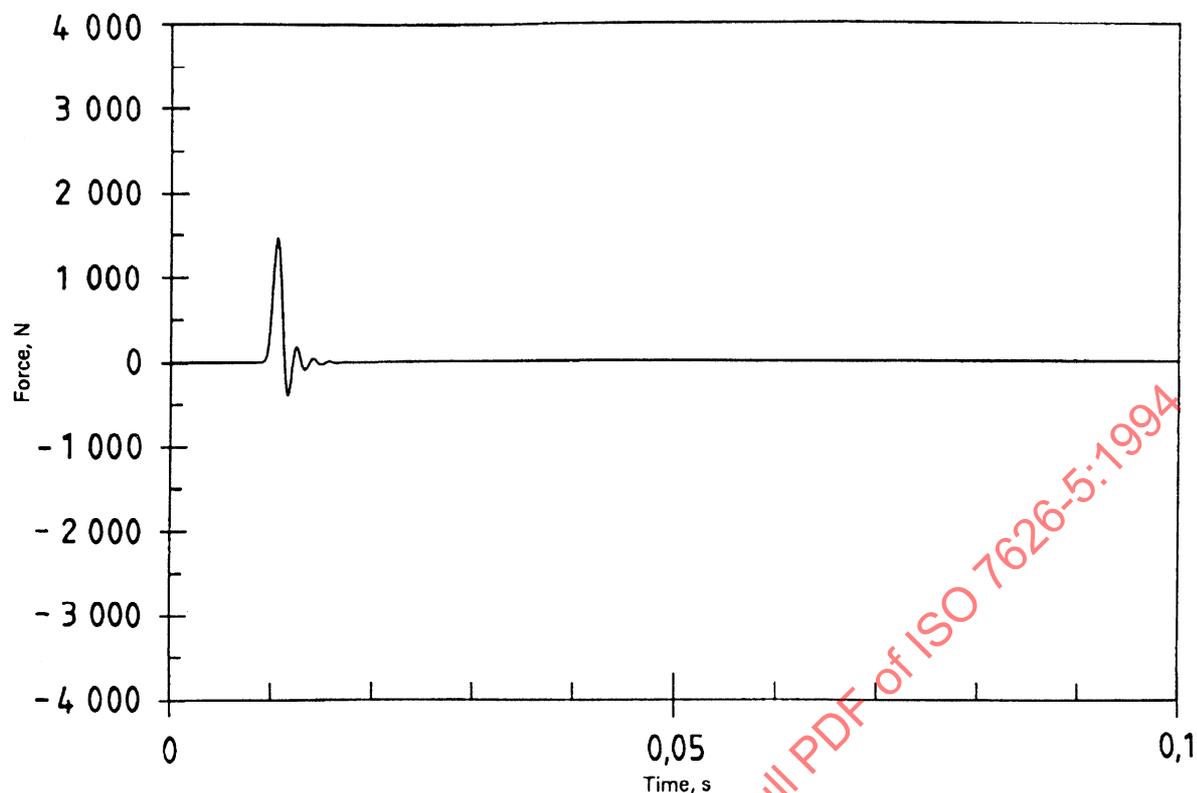


a) Impact force-time history - Unfiltered

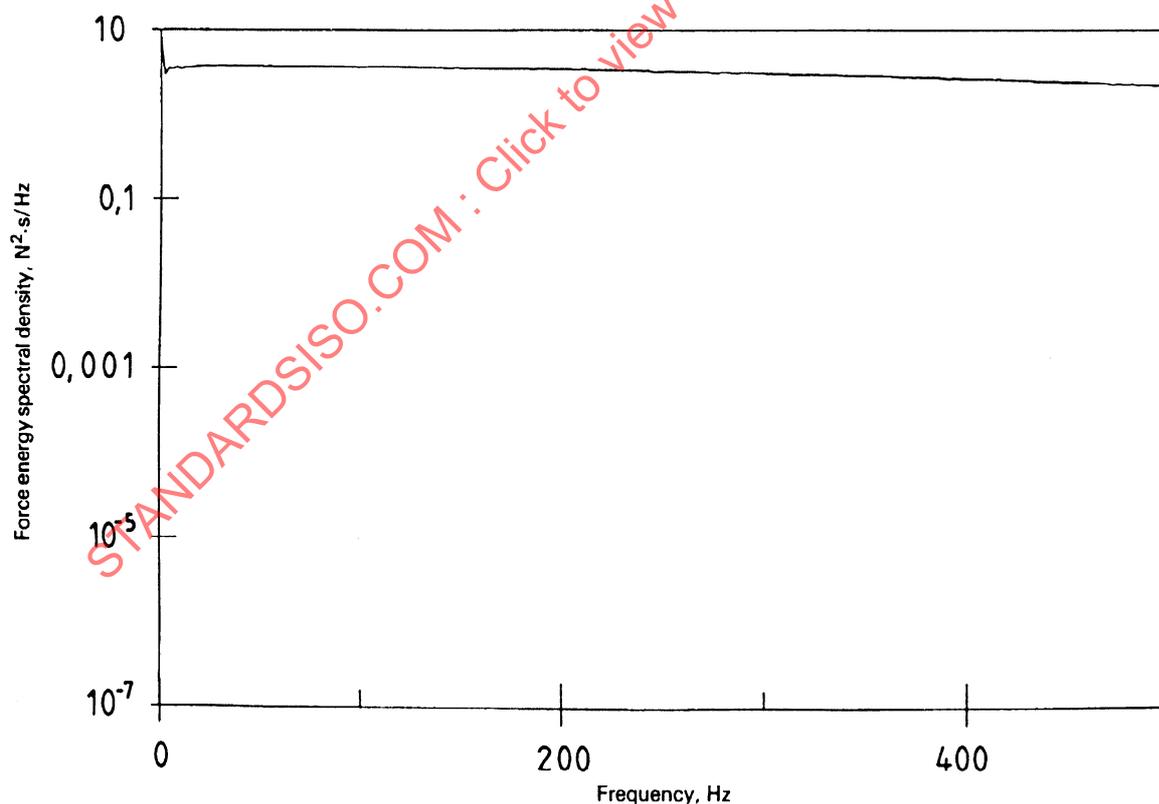


b) Energy spectral density corresponding to figure 3 a)

Figure 3 — Typical force pulse and spectrum

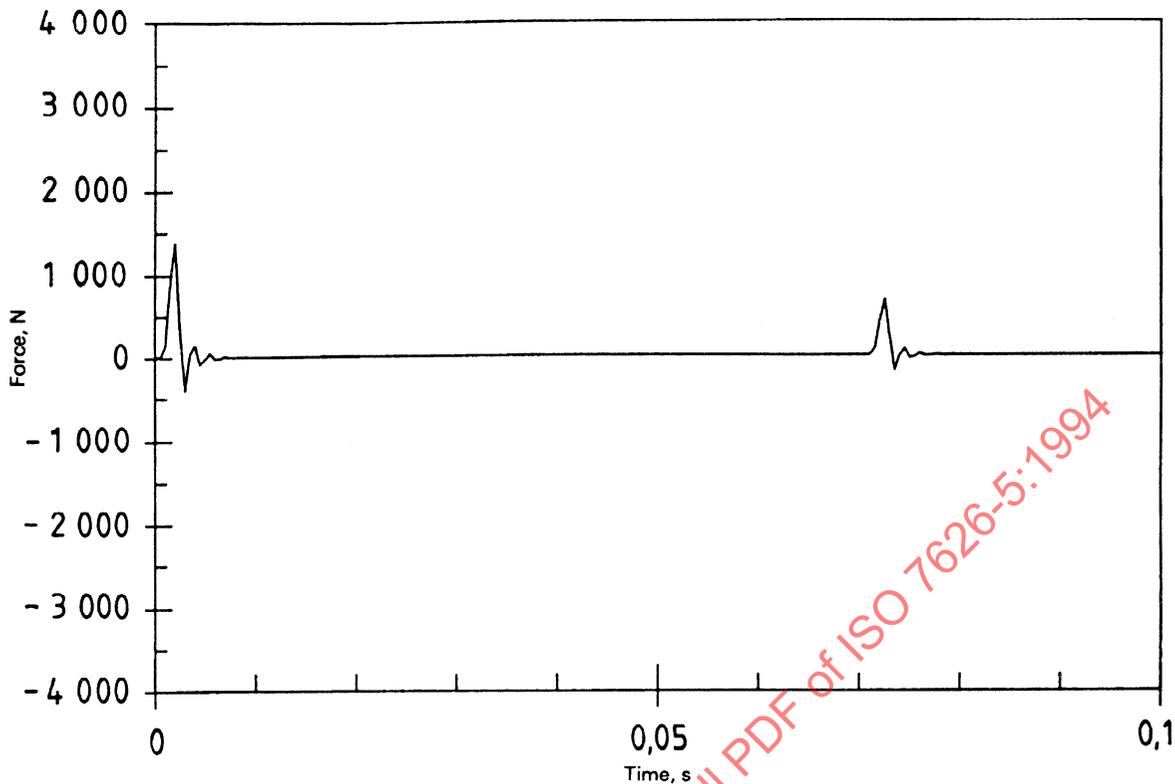


a) Impact force-time history, low-pass filtered at 625 Hz

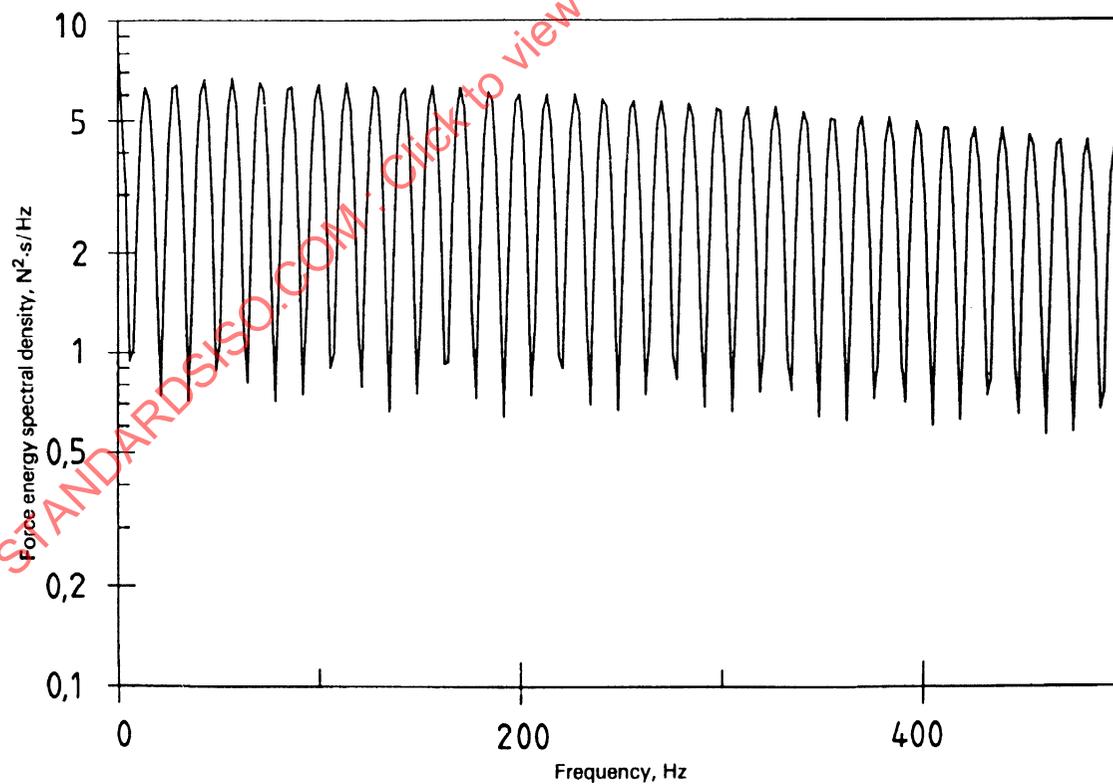


b) Energy spectral density corresponding to figure 4 a)

Figure 4 — Effects of low-pass filtering on the force pulse of figure 3 a) and its spectrum



a) Double-impact force-time history



b) Energy spectral density corresponding to figure 5 a)

Figure 5 — Spectrum effects of two impacts in the force record

7 Transducer system

7.1 General

Transducers and their associated signal conditioning should be selected in accordance with the criteria given in ISO 7626-1 and ISO 7626-2. For use in impact measurements, it is especially important that the transducer system has low noise and a large linear dynamic range.

7.2 Impactor calibration

Although the effective mass between the force transducer and the structure under test does not affect the motion-response signal, it may have a significant effect on the force calibration of the impactor. The following operational calibration test should be performed at the beginning and end of each series of measurements, and it should be repeated whenever the mass or tip of the impactor is changed.

This operational calibration is essentially the same as the procedure described in ISO 7626-2:1990, 7.5; it is performed by measuring either the mobility or the accelerance of a freely suspended rigid calibration block of known mass. The measured frequency response for the calibration block should agree with its known value (for example, an accelerance magnitude of $1/m$, where m is the total mass of the calibration block, including any attached transducers) within $\pm 5\%$ over the frequency range of interest. This should be accomplished by using a known calibration value for the motion-response transducer and adjusting the calibration constant for the signal to achieve the correct mobility or accelerance magnitude. The operational calibration test should also be performed on any additional response transducers which will be used in the measurements (for example multi-axis response transducers); these transducers should be assigned calibration values consistent with the force calibration obtained above. The measurement system and the impactor shall be in the same configuration as will be used in the mobility measurements which employ this calibration value. The mass of the calibration block shall be chosen so that its mobility is representative of the range of mobilities to be measured.

If the calibration measurement does not yield an accelerance value which is essentially constant over the frequency range of interest, the cause of this discrepancy should be investigated and resolved before proceeding with the test.

8 Processing of the transducer signals

8.1 Filtering

The transducer signals shall be low-pass filtered before the data are sampled and digitized by the Fourier analyser, in order to prevent out-of-band signals from being improperly interpreted within the analysis range, a phenomenon known as "aliasing". Most commercially available analysers now include built-in filters with cut-off frequencies matched to the available frequency ranges of the analyser. The adequacy of alias protection can be checked by using a good-quality signal generator to produce a full-scale sine wave input at a variety of out-of-band frequencies and checking the resulting spectra for spurious in-band frequency components. The most important frequencies to be used are at and above the sampling frequency minus the maximum analysis frequency.

Other important filter characteristics include the channel-to-channel gain and phase match within the pass-band. The operational calibration test given in 7.2 includes these factors, along with all other aspects of the measurement system. The channel-to-channel match of the filters and analyser can be checked by connecting the same broad-band (random or impulsive) signal to all filter channels and measuring the frequency response between each pair of channels. The magnitude of the frequency response should equal unity within $\pm 5\%$ over the frequency range of interest, and the phase should be zero within $\pm 5^\circ$.

In order to make full use of the dynamic range of the analyser, it may be desirable to employ a high-pass filter to attenuate signal components below the frequency range of interest. In particular, any d.c. component in the transducer signals may be eliminated by "a.c. coupling" the inputs to the analyser. This is especially important if windowing is employed (see 8.5). If high-pass filtering is used, make certain that it does not introduce gain or phase errors within the frequency range of interest.

8.2 Transient capture characteristics

The digital record of each impact should be acquired using the transient capture mode of the analyser, in order to place the beginning of the data near the start of the digital record. The digital record should include a small amount of pre-trigger data in order to ensure that the leading edge of the impact is not lost. See figure 6. If the analyser lacks pre-trigger capability, the best method is to use external triggering on the unfiltered force signal.

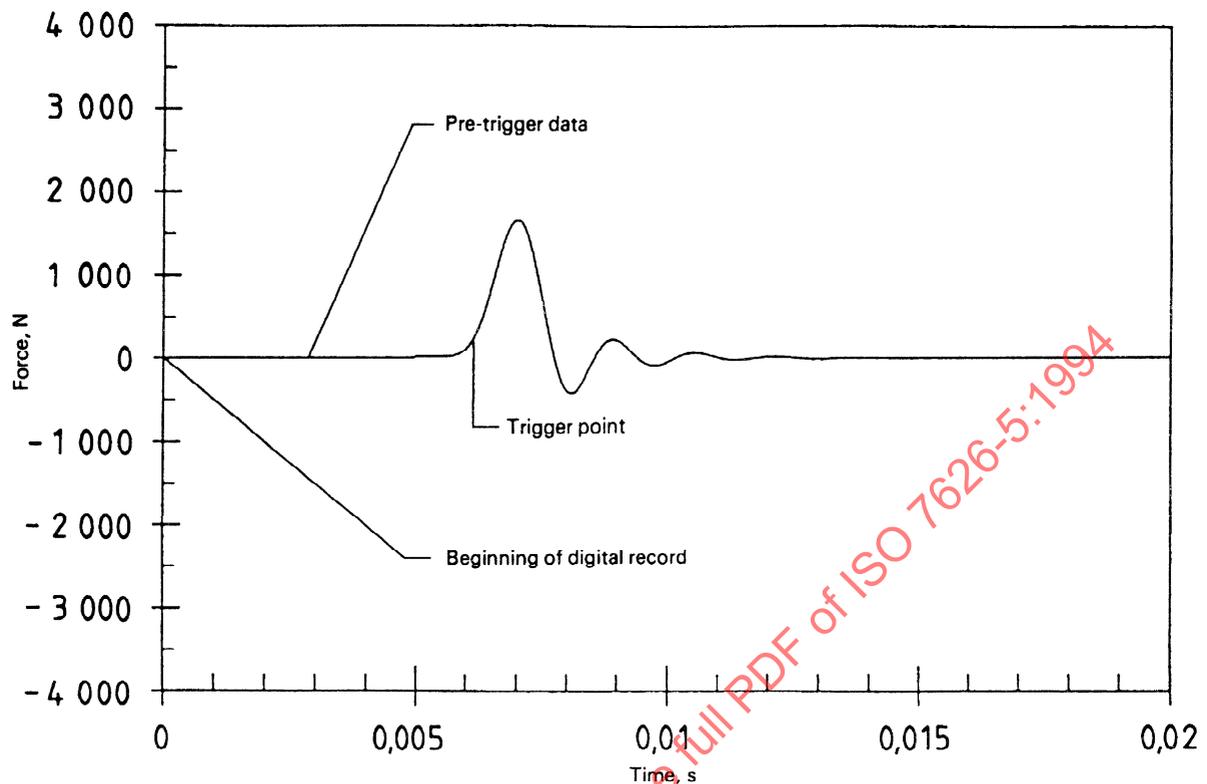


Figure 6 — Transient captured force-time history with pre-trigger

8.3 Sampling relationships

Each digital record for Fourier processing consists of a fixed number, N , of equally spaced discrete samples from a filtered analog waveform. The block size N of the discrete finite transform (DFT) is usually a power of two, because efficient algorithms exist for such values. A block size of 1 024 samples is typical in current designs. The record length is $T = N\Delta t$, where Δt is the sampling interval, in seconds. The sampling frequency is $1/\Delta t$.

The DFT of such a record produces $(N/2) + 1$ non-redundant complex Fourier coefficients which represent the spectrum at discrete frequencies with a spacing of $\Delta f = 1/T$ Hz from 0 Hz up to half the sampling frequency (known as the Nyquist frequency). In practice, the cut-off frequency of the filters must be set to a value somewhat below the Nyquist frequency in order to prevent aliasing, because the filters are not infinitely sharp. Typically, the sampling frequency is from 2.56 to 4 times the filter cut-off frequency, depending on the filter roll-off characteristics; for a block size of 1 024, this yields between 400 and 256 "spectral lines" of valid frequency domain information from the DFT.

For the case of transient data which are entirely contained within the digital record, the DFT coincides with the true Fourier transform over the frequency range measured; that is, the discrete spectral values of the DFT are samples from the idealized continuous spectrum. The response signals from an impact test on a linear structure take the form of a summation of exponentially decaying sinusoids, plus some background noise. The best results are usually obtained if the response signal decays to about 1 % of its initial magnitude at the end of the record. This figure represents a compromise: using a longer record to capture the response down to the limit of detection would improve the frequency resolution but it would decrease the signal-to-noise ratio of the measurement; using a shorter record leads to excessive truncation of the response and causes the signal processing error known as "leakage" to become significant.

Since the record length is the product of the block size and the sampling interval, it might seem that the record length could be controlled by proper manipulation of these two factors. However, the sampling frequency is fixed by the desired frequency range, and the block size is constrained by the design of the Fourier analyser employed. In particular, very lightly

damped structures may require an extremely large block size if this approach is taken. Two additional methods are more commonly used to deal with this case.

- a) An exponential window (see 8.5) may be used to add a known amount of artificial decay to the data before Fourier processing.
- b) Zoom processing may be employed to increase the effective record length without actually increasing the block size. Zoom provides enhanced frequency resolution within a reduced analysis band.

8.4 Avoidance of saturation (clipping)

Impact excitation presents a particular danger of saturating the measurement system, due to the likelihood of significant amounts of out-of-band energy in the signals. Furthermore, the need to use the maximum dynamic range available means that the peak signal values will often be rather close to the saturation limits at various points in the measurement system. As noted in 6.2, the digital records which are used in the measurement provide poor definition of the actual waveforms; they should not be relied on for the detection of saturation. The best means of avoiding saturation is to monitor the unfiltered signals with a storage-type oscilloscope having a bandwidth which extends well beyond the signal bandwidth. If this is not available, the signals may be checked using the Fourier analyser on a frequency range well above the highest frequency present in the data; this check should be performed at each location prior to the mobility measurement, using an impact force equal to the highest which will be used during the measurement.

Saturation problems are not always evident as a clipped appearance in the transducer waveforms; the manufacturer's specifications for the maximum voltage for linear operation should be observed. Saturation may be eliminated by reducing the impact force, reducing the gain in the signal conditioner and/or the Fourier analyser, or by selecting a less-sensitive transducer, as appropriate.

8.5 Windowing techniques

8.5.1 Force signal

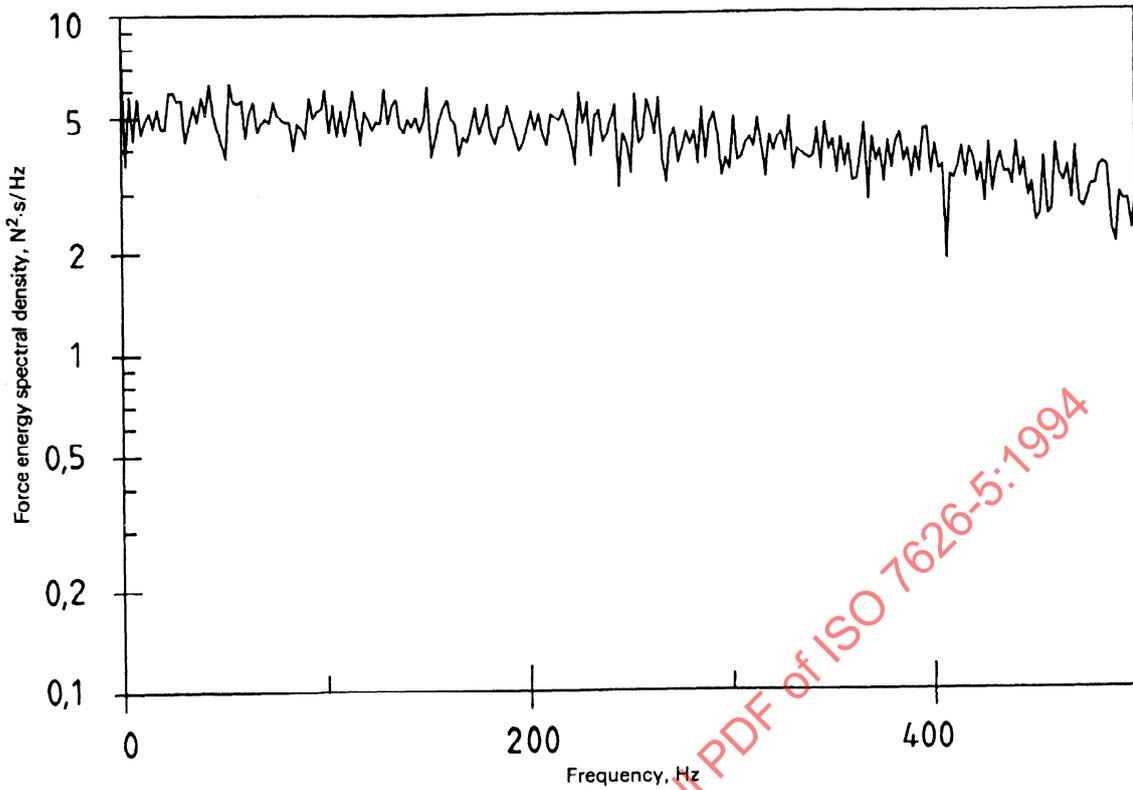
Because the impact force signal represents a very small portion of the digital record analysed (typically less than 1 %), even very low level noise may produce significant errors in the autospectrum of the force. This is especially true if either zoom or a very large blocksize is used. Such noise is not reduced by averaging with the usual frequency-response function estimate, since the noise is additive in the force autospectrum. (See ref. [8].)

Random noise can be greatly reduced by multiplying the force record by a "force window" which has unity gain for a portion of the record which includes the force signal (including the filter response), and sets the remaining samples in the record to a value of exactly zero prior to Fourier processing. This procedure introduces no distortion as long as none of the force data is attenuated and the background noise is broad-band in nature. Figure 7 compares the energy spectral density of a typical pulse with and without force windowing.

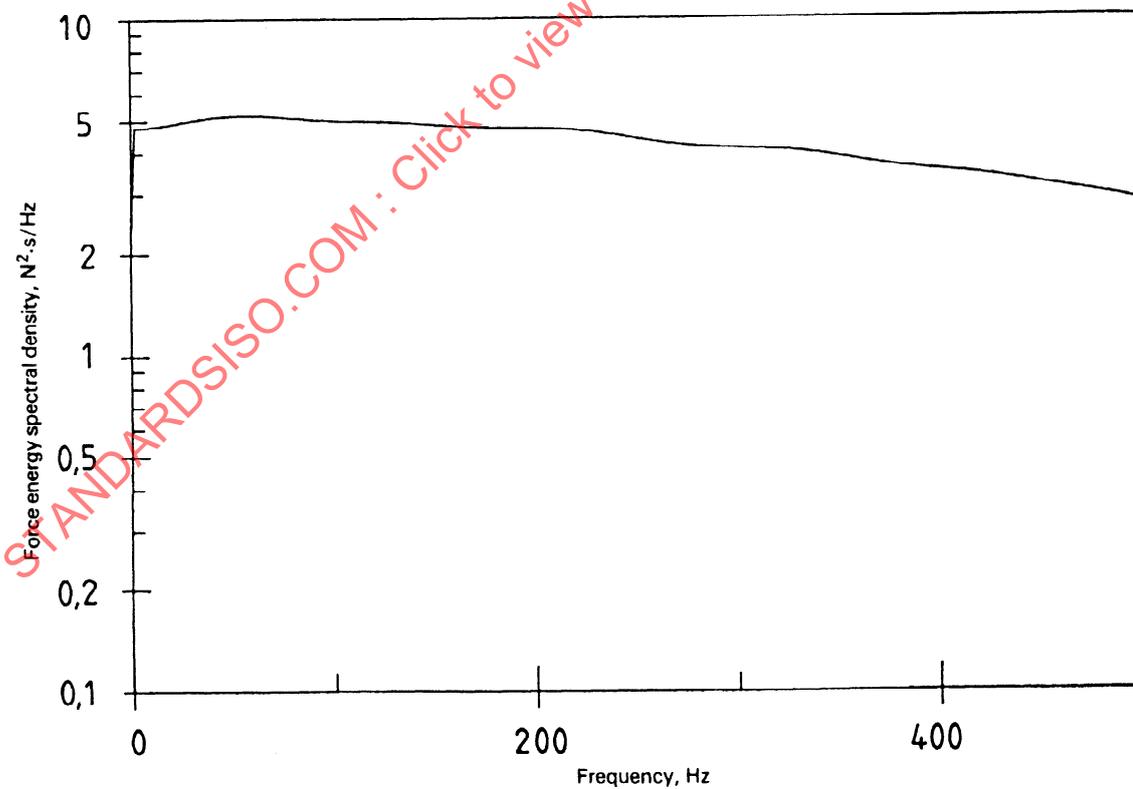
WARNING — If the force record contains significant levels of periodic noise or d.c. offset, then force windowing will reduce its magnitude in the spectrum; however, the spectrum of the noise will be spread over a rather wide frequency range due to FFT leakage caused by truncation of the continuous noise signal. Therefore, noise which occurs at discrete frequencies of no interest (such as 0 Hz or power line frequency) may contaminate a significant portion of the frequency range of interest after windowing. Leakage can be restricted to a somewhat narrower frequency band by using a force window which makes a smooth transition between zero and one, as described in ref. [4]. However, the best approach is to eliminate all periodic and d.c. noise components from the data before applying a force window.

Figure 8 shows the effect of windowing a force signal with excessive 60 Hz noise using a rectangular force window.

NOTE 12 The same warning applies to the use of the exponential window described in 8.5.2.

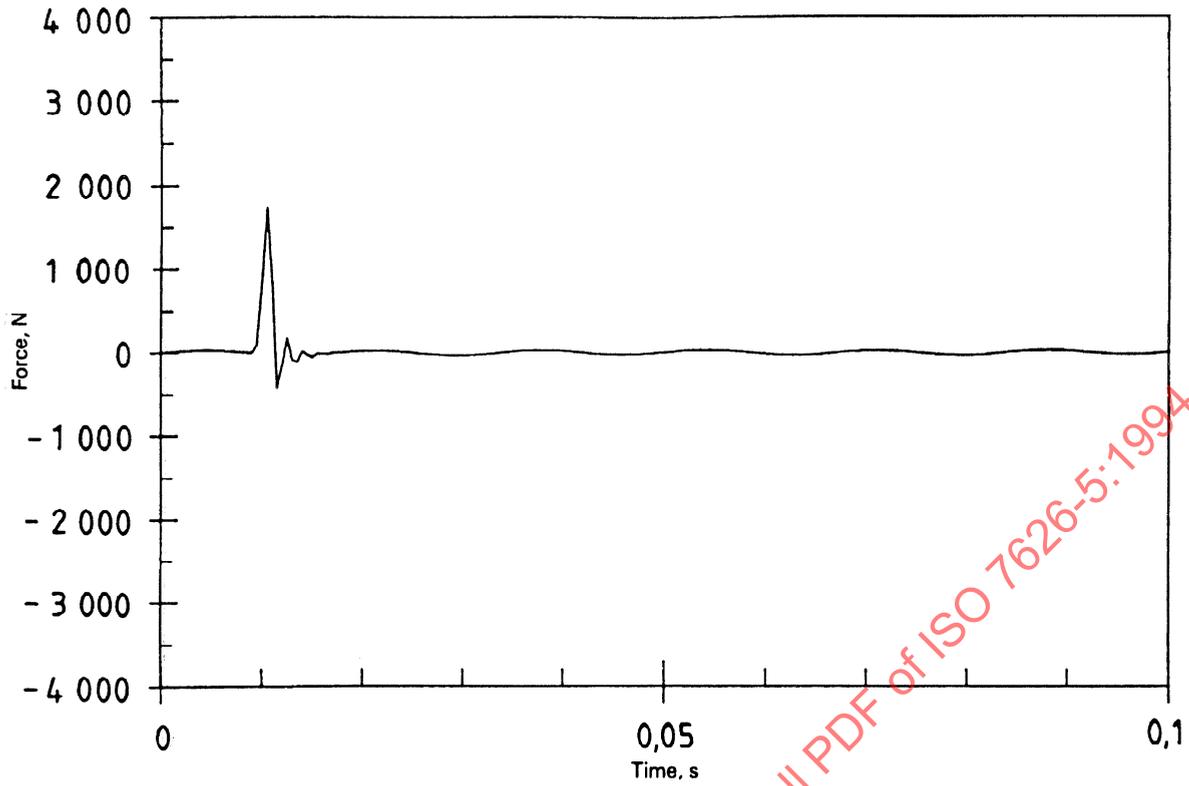


a) Force energy spectral density without force window

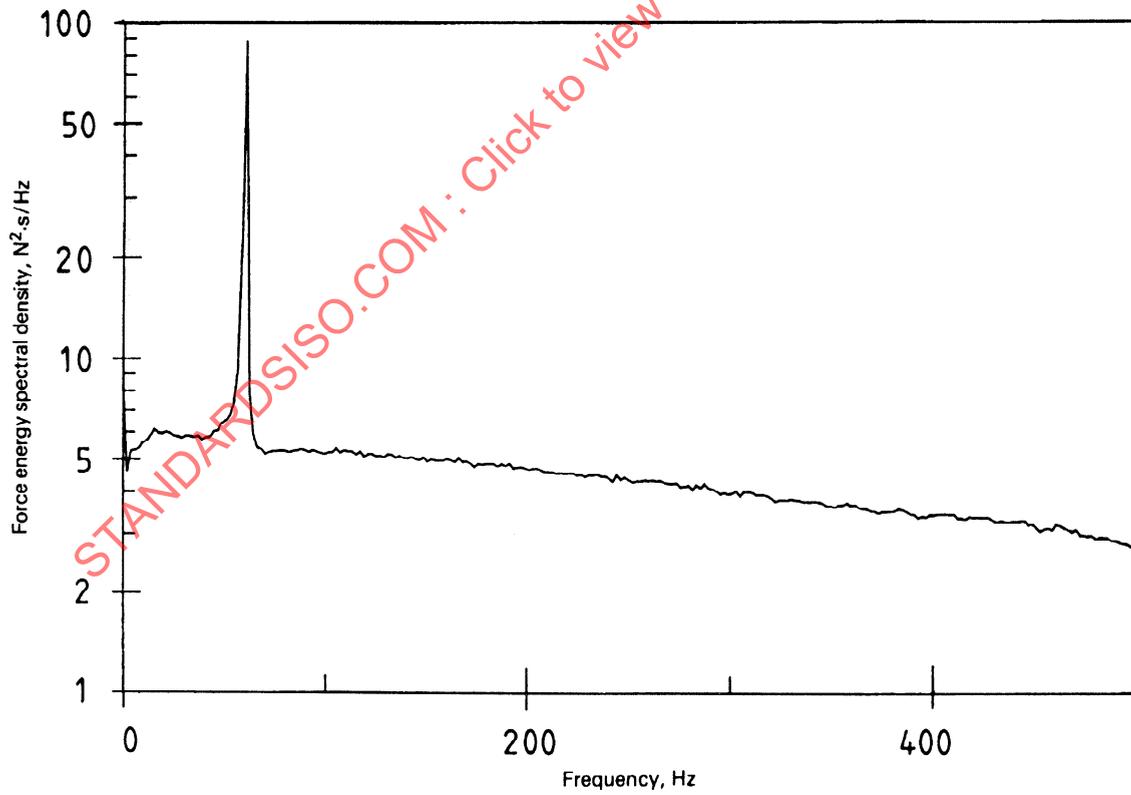


b) Force energy spectral density with force window

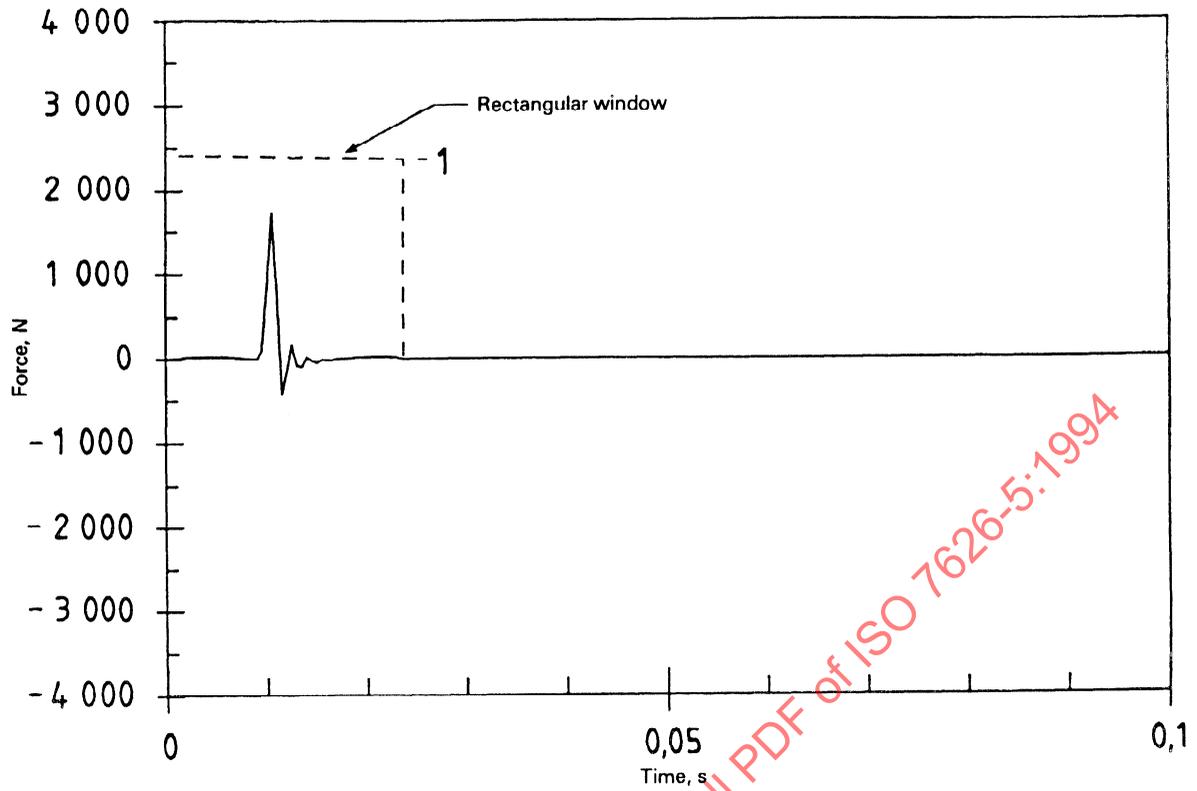
Figure 7 — The effect of “force windowing”



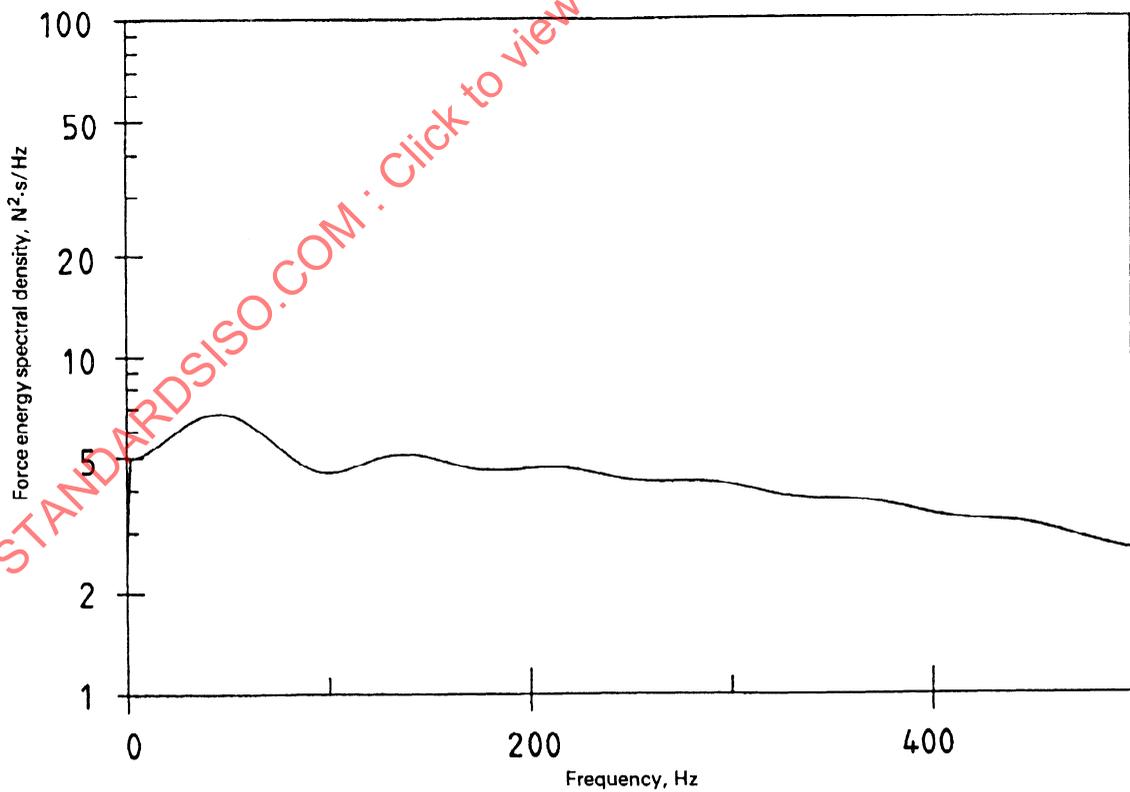
a) Force-time history with periodic noise



b) Energy spectral density corresponding to figure 8 a)



c) Force-time history with rectangular force window



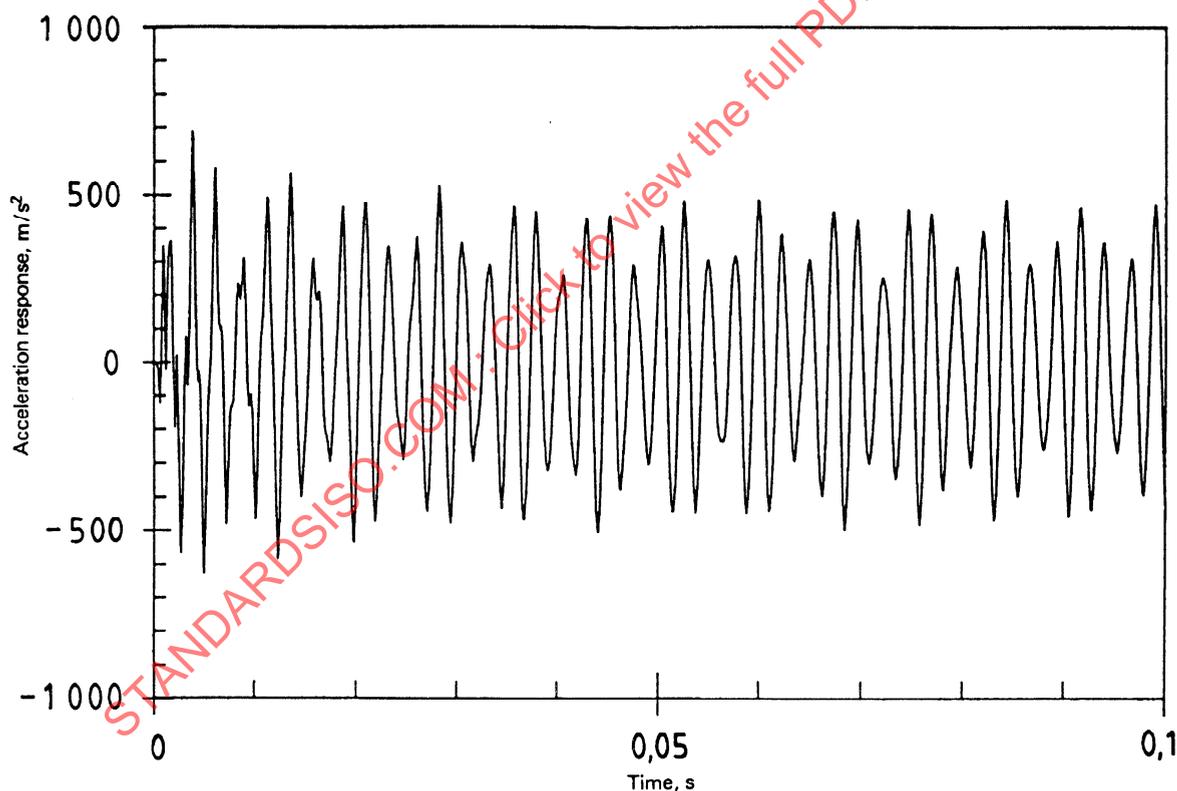
d) Energy spectral density corresponding to figure 8 c)

Figure 8 — Leakage errors caused by a force window

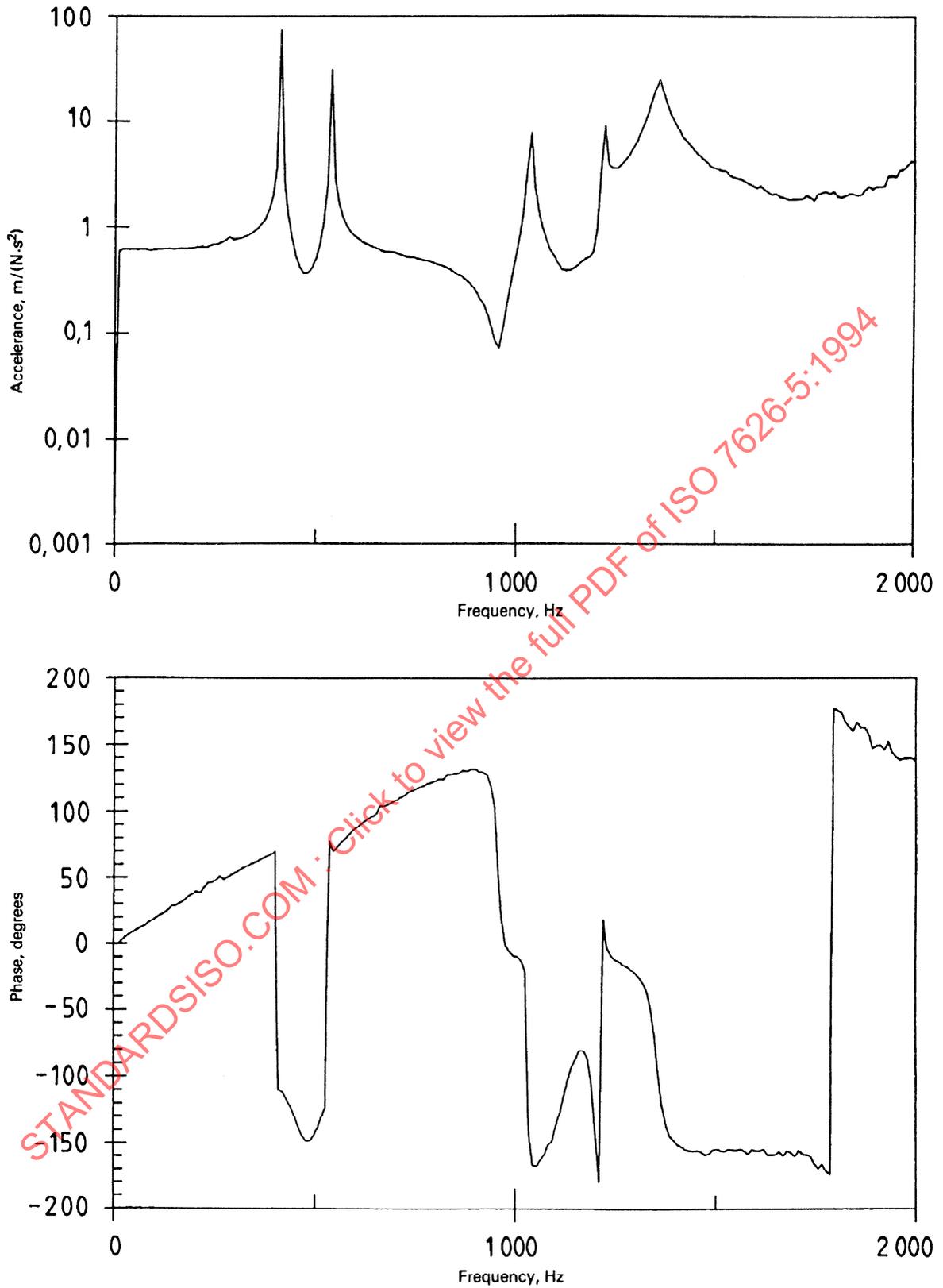
8.5.2 Windowing the response signals

As described in 8.3, the response signals should decay to about 1 % of their initial values at the end of the digital record in order to prevent truncation errors. A convenient check is to verify that the peak response signal at the midpoint of the record is about 10 % of the highest peak response. For lightly damped structures it may be impossible (or undesirable) to achieve this condition directly because it may require an impractically large blocksize or a very narrow bandwidth zoom in the Fourier analyser. If such fine frequency resolution is not otherwise required by the application, then a better approach may be to add a known amount of artificial decay to the response data prior to Fourier processing by means of a time-domain exponential decay window.

An exponential window has an initial value of unity, and decreases exponentially to some final value at the end of the time record. Figure 9 shows a lightly damped response record and the corresponding frequency-response estimate. Figure 10 shows the same data after applying an exponential window which decays to 5 % of the initial value. The frequency response in figure 9 exhibits the characteristic signs of DFT "leakage" errors: significant phase distortion and a somewhat noisy magnitude plot. Furthermore, the unwindowed frequency-response function will underestimate the true magnitude of each resonance peak by an unpredictable amount which depends on the fraction of the total response for that particular vibration mode which has been truncated in the time record.



a) Acceleration response



b) Accelerance (a/F magnitude and phase) without exponential window

Figure 9 — Unwindowed response and frequency-response function

Figure 10 shows a marked reduction in distortion, and although all resonance peaks show reduced amplitude, these amplitudes can be corrected by the procedure given in annex A. This correction depends on determining the apparent damping of each vibration mode present in the (windowed) data, and then subtracting the known damping due to the exponential window. As a general guideline, the response signal should decay naturally to 25 % or less of its initial magnitude within the digital record, otherwise the amplitude corrections become very sensitive to any error in the damping estimates.

Even if the time record is long enough to capture essentially all of the response data, the use of an exponential window can improve the signal-to-noise ratio of the measurement by giving increased weight to the high-amplitude portion of the response.

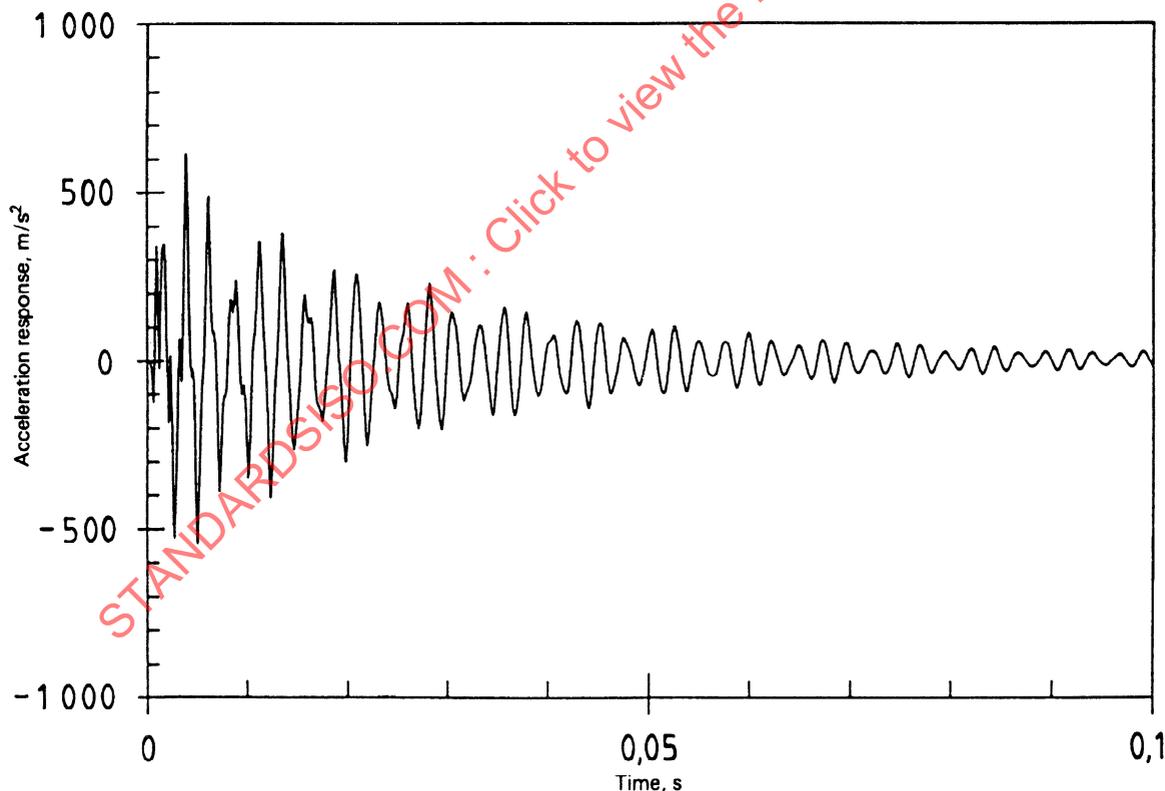
8.6 Averaging techniques

Frequency-domain averaging of data from several impacts at a fixed point may be performed in order to

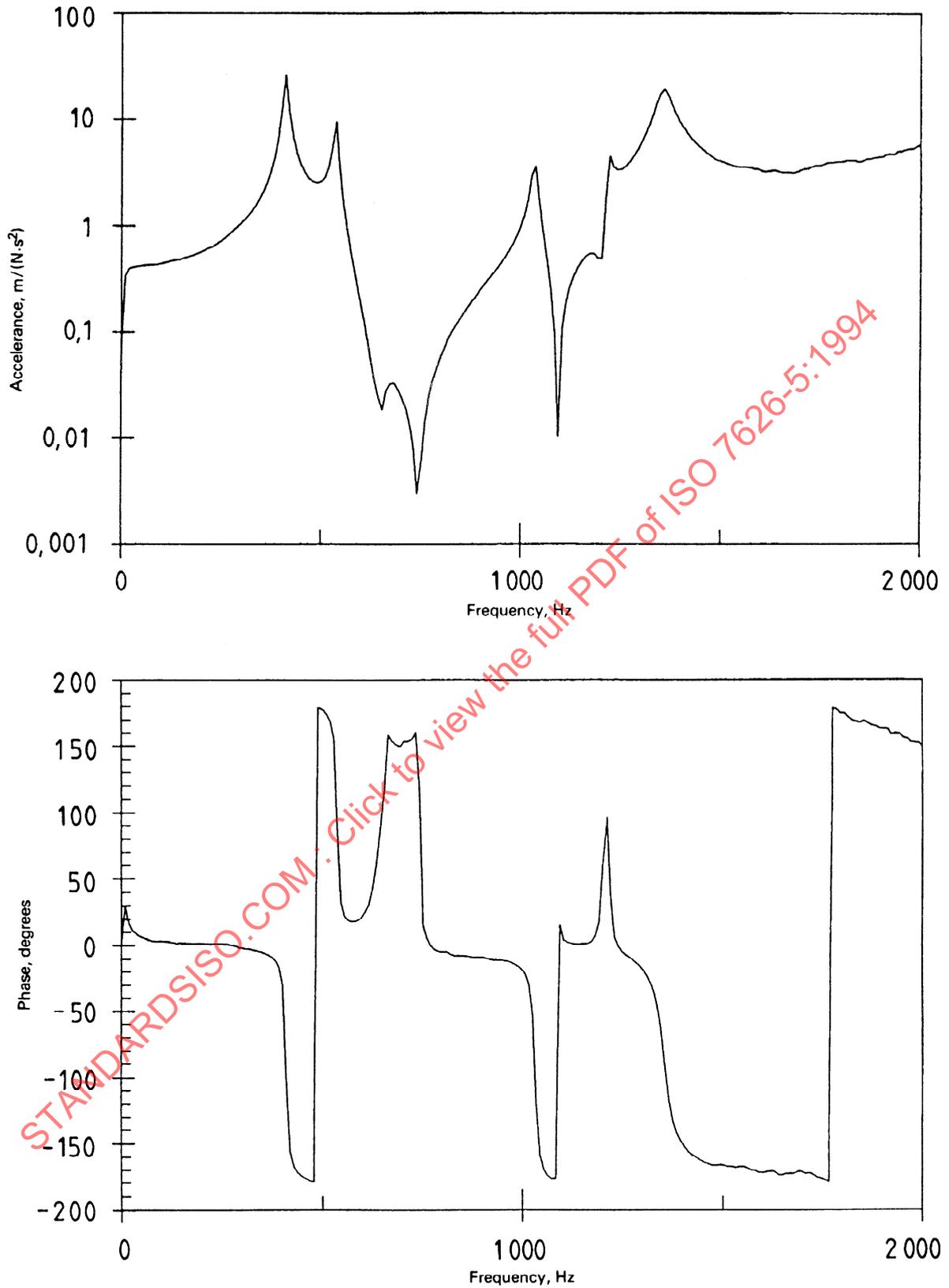
improve the estimate of the frequency-response function. This estimate may be obtained as the averaged cross-spectrum of the response and the force, divided by the averaged autospectrum of the force. Averaging also permits calculation of the coherence function (see 9.1).

In a low-noise environment, averaging three to five impacts is usually sufficient to verify data quality. A larger number of impacts may be used to reduce the effect of uncorrelated noise on the response signals. However, the impact method loses its speed advantage if a very large number of impacts must be averaged, and so other excitation methods should be considered if the background noise cannot be reduced.

Make sure that the response of the structure has decayed below the limit of detection before applying the next impact for averaging; any residual "ringing" will interfere with the measurement of the subsequent response signals. For small or lightly damped structures, it may be useful to damp out the structural response manually.



a) Acceleration response with exponential window



b) Accelerance (a/F magnitude and phase) with exponential window

Figure 10 — Exponentially windowed response and frequency-response function