



DTU Civil Engineering  
Department of Civil Engineering

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# SPECIAL MOBILITY STRAND

## STRUCTURAL FIRE SAFETY DESIGN: challenges and shortcomings

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**Novi Sad, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

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## OUTLINE

-  *Recent major fires*
-  *Design shortcomings*
  - *Design fires*
  - *Structural design*
  - *Design process*
-  *Conclusive remarks*





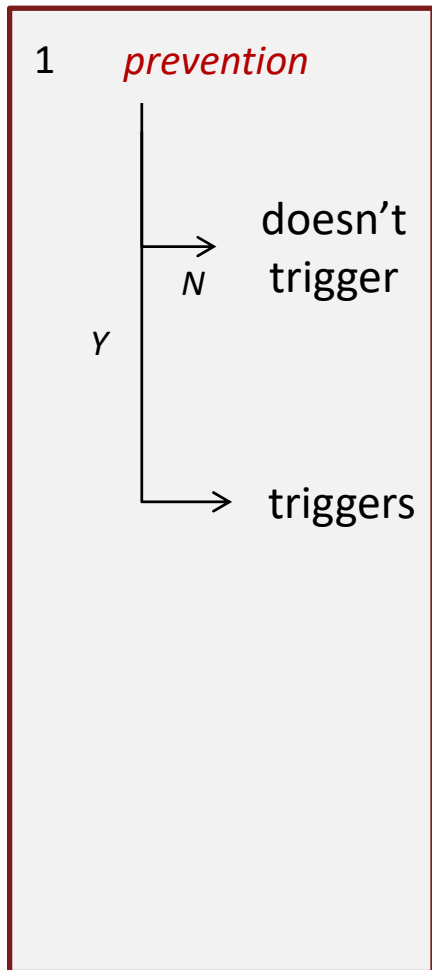
## OUTLINE



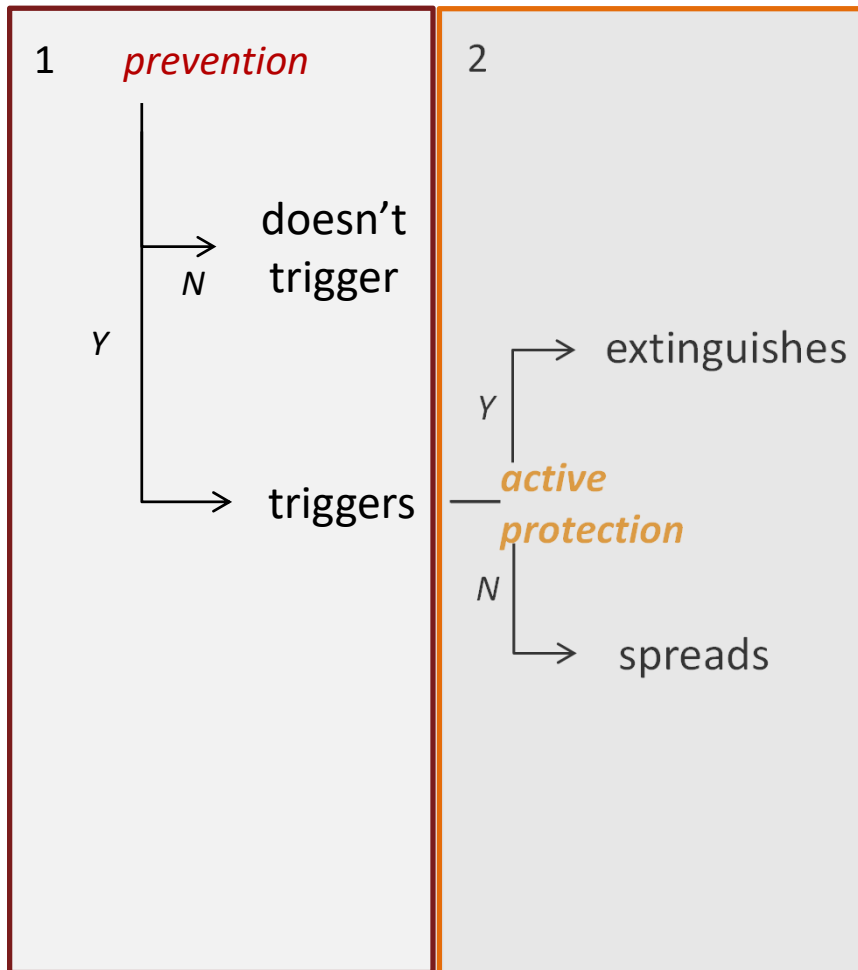
*Recent major fires*



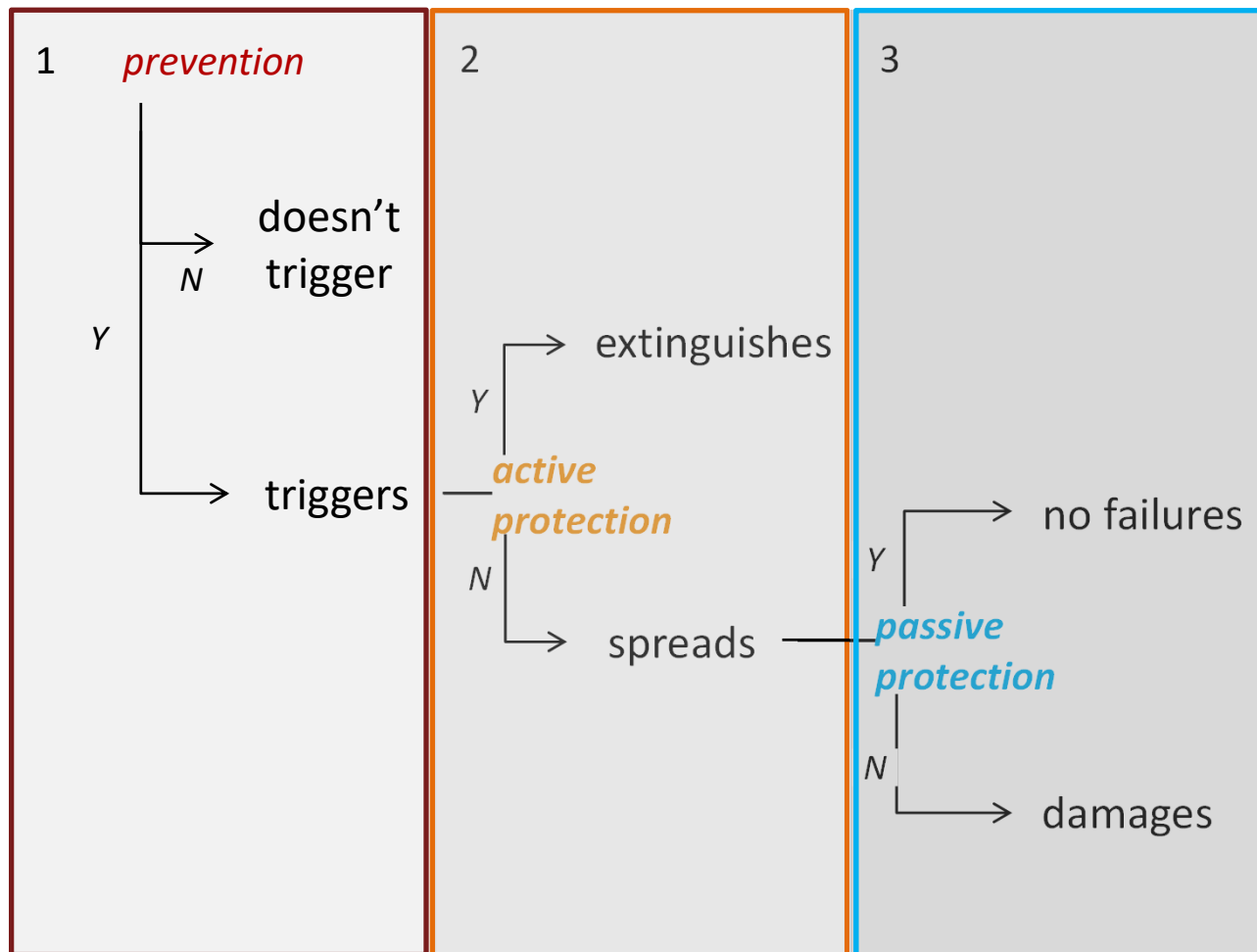
# Fire Safety Strategy



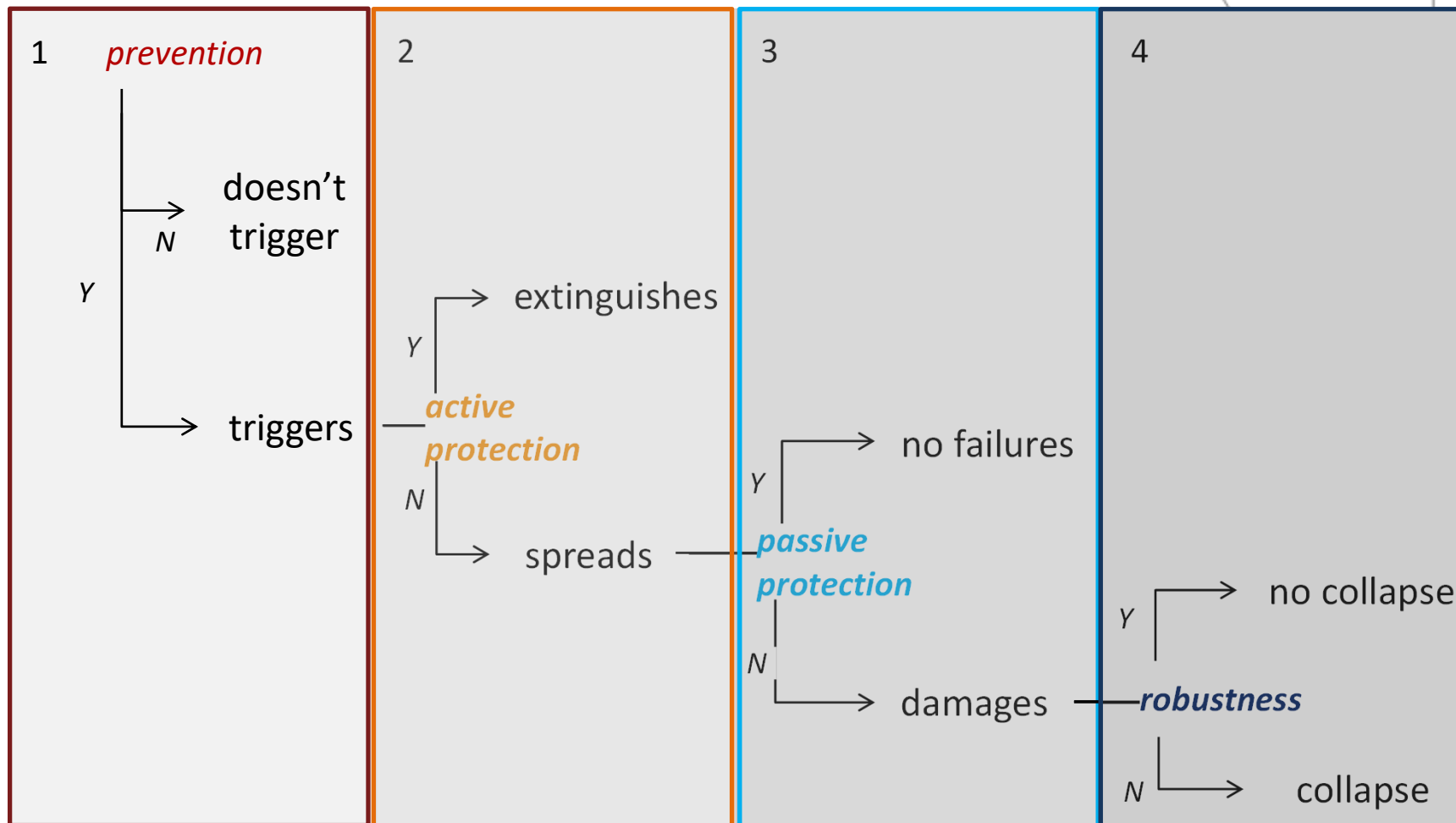
# Fire Safety Strategy



# Fire Safety Strategy

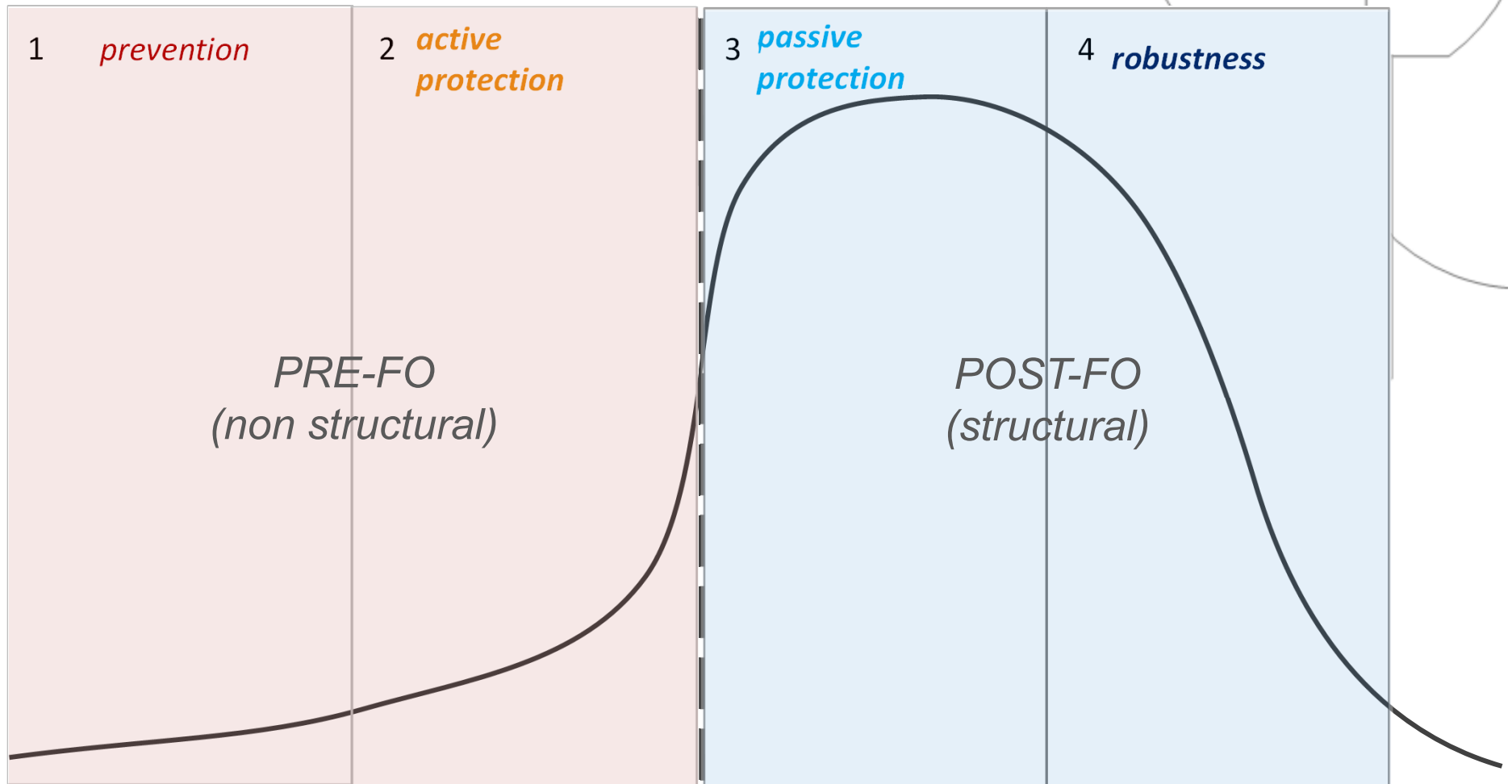


# Fire Safety Strategy



# Fire Safety Strategy

FLASHOVER





# MAJOR FIRES IN TALL BUILDINGS

## TVCC HOTEL, Beijing, China, Feb. 2009

Built: under construction  
Height: 44 floors, 158 m  
Use: hotel, not occupied yet  
Structure: steel-framed with concrete core  
Fire: triggered at roof, spread downwards  
Cause: unauthorized firework  
Duration: 5 hours  
Injuries: 1 casualty (fireman), 7 injuries  
Damages: many floors, no frame, ca. \$100mil

### HIGHLIGHTS

*Fire triggers: firework*

*Fire spread: flammable facade*



# MAJOR FIRES IN TALL BUILDINGS

## SHANGHAI APARTMENT, China, Nov 2010

- Built: sprinkled  
Height: 28 stories, 85 m  
Use: residential  
Fire: started at 10<sup>th</sup> floor, spread to the roof through façade and then moved inside the building  
Cause: unauthorized welding work and polyurethane foam insulated façade  
Duration: several hours, but very rapid spread through facade (ca. 10 min)  
Casualties: 58 casualties, 70 injured

### HIGHLIGHTS

*Fire triggers: welding spark*

*Fire spread: flammable facade*



By monkeyking (Peijin Chen), CC BY 2.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12082626>



## MAJOR FIRES IN TALL BUILDINGS

### SHENYANG HOTEL, China, Feb 2011

Cause: firework on the roof of adjacent building  
Spread: aluminium cladding façade  
Note: fire spread on adjacent building

### TAMWEEL TOWER, Dubai, Emirates, 2012

Cause: cigarette butts onto waste material  
Spread: aluminium and fiberglass cladding façade

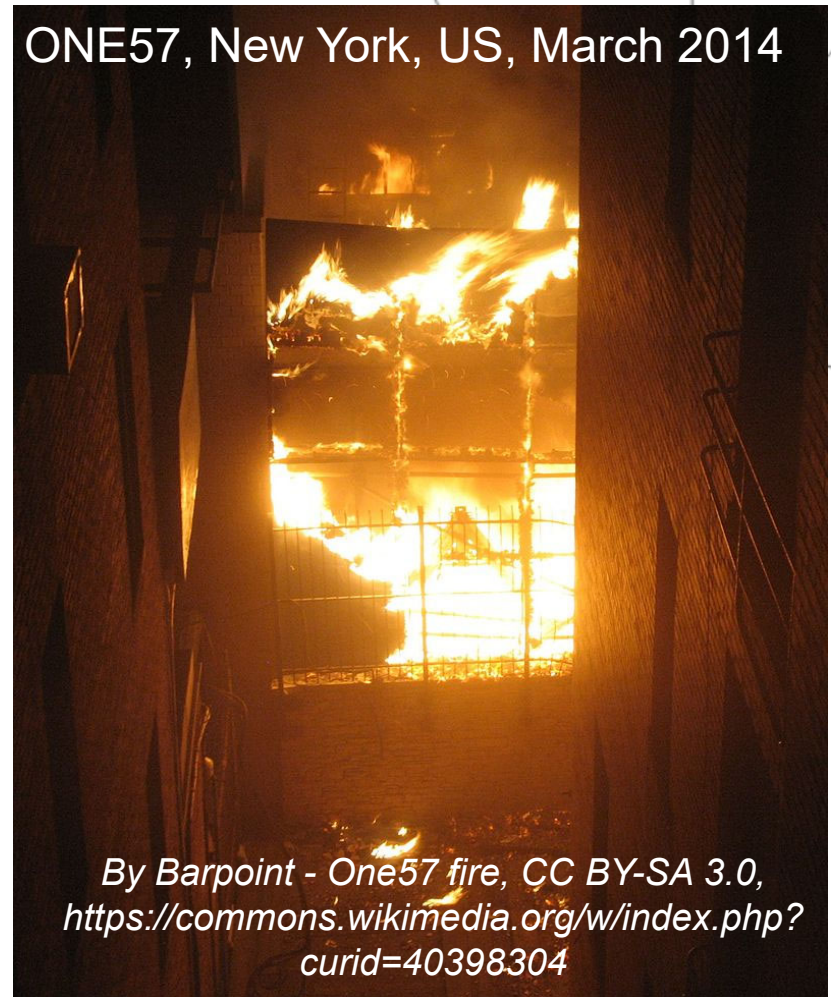
### GROZNY BUILDING, Cechnya, 2013

Cause: worker with gas burner  
Spread: combustible cladding  
Note: flaming debris

### ONE57, New York, US, March 2014

Cause: still unknown  
Note: fire spread to adjacent building

### ONE57, New York, US, March 2014



List of major tall building fires: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skyscraper\\_fire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skyscraper_fire)

## MAJOR FIRES IN TALL BUILDINGS

### MARINA TORCH TOWER, Dubai, 2015&2017

Fire: grill on a balcony  
Spread: combustible cladding façade  
Note: flaming debris  
new fire in 2017 after façade renovation

### DOWNTOWN HOTEL, Dubai, New Year 2015/2016

Fire: short circuit  
Spread: very rapid through façade  
Note: 13 h long fire

### NEO200, Melbourne, AU 2015&2019

Fire: cigarette smoldering ignited façade  
Spread: very rapid through façade  
Note: another fire (one floor only) in 2015  
cladding similar to Lacrosse building burned  
in 2014 in Melbourne and to Grenfell Tower



*Ref.: Leisted: "Fire Performance of Steel-faced Insulation Panels [...]", PhD Thesis, DTU, Denmark, 2018*  
*Ref.: Crewe et al.: "Fire Performance of Sandwich Panels in a Small Room Test, Fire Technology 54, 2018*

## GRENPELL TOWER, London, UK, 2017

Built: 1974  
Height: 24 stories  
Use: residential  
Fire cause: faulty freezer in one apartment,  
Spread: through newly installed composite cladding  
Duration: 60 h  
Injuries: 70 injured, 80 casualties  
Damages: to be demolished



### COMPOSITE CLADDING

Pre-fabricated concrete wall

PIR foam plate (150 mm)

Ventilation gap (50 mm)

Aluminium-polyethylene sandwich plates (3mm each)

By Natalie Oxford, CC BY 4.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=59913134>



# FIRE-INDUCED COLLAPSE



## PLASCO BUILDING, Theran, Iran, Jan 2017

- Height: 17 stories, 42 m
- Use: residential + shopping mall
- Structure: steel frame with bracing
- Fire: spread from 9<sup>th</sup> floor upwards
- Cause: faulty electrical connection
- Duration: collapse after 4 hours
- Injuries: 26 casualties (16 firemen),  
230 injured (70 by collapse)
- Damages: complete collapse

### HIGHLIGHTS

*Structure: steel*

*Collapse: after 4 h fire – fire fighter safety*



# FIRE-INDUCED COLLAPSE



## **WILTON PAES DE ALMEIDA, Sao Paulo, Brazil, May 2018**

Built:	1968, 85 m
Height:	26 stories (24 above ground)
Use:	residential + shopping mall
Structure:	steel frame with concrete floors
Fire:	spread from 5 <sup>th</sup> floor spread also to adjacent buildings
Cause:	short circuit
Duration:	90 min
Injuries:	7 casualties + 2 missing
Damages:	complete collapse; damages from debris to adjacent church

### HIGHLIGHTS

*Fire spread: to adjacent building*

*Structure: steel*



## FIRE-INDUCED COLLAPSE

Date	Location	Construction type	Notes
2000	Textile factory, Alexandria, Egypt	Concrete	Collapse after 9 h of fire
2001	WTC1, WTC2, WTC7, New York, US	Steel frame	Complete collapse
2004	12 story building, Cairo, Egypt	R.C.	4 stories illegally added
2005	Windsor Tower, Madrid, Spain	Composite	Collapse standstill at technical floor
2008	Technical University of Delft, Netherland	R.C	Northern wing collapse
2017	Plasco Building, Theran, Iran	Steel	Complete collapse
May 2018	Wilton Paes De Almeida, Sao Paulo, Brazil	Steel	Complete collapse





BRE Test: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bjMLFx4IQg>

## CAR PARK FIRES



## CAR PARK FIRES *(from 2001 with more than 10 cars involved in the fire)*

Date	Location	Burned cars	Construction type	Notes
2001-09-16	Fasanvænget, Kokkedal, Denmark	30	Open	70 people evacuated
2002-10-13	Schiphol airport, Netherlands	51	Open	
2004-04-06	Jacob Hansensvej Odense, Denmark	10	Open	Collapse of the steel shelter
2008-12-26	Kilmarnock's Foregate multi-storey	11		
2010-08-30	Stansted airport, UK	24	Open air	High wind reported
2013-10-14	Olympic Park Aquatic Center, Sydney, AU	80	Open air	11 killed, 15 injured
2014-04-25	Edinburgh Airport Parking Facility, UK	21	Open air	
2015-07-30	Oldham Tesco carpark fire	15	Closed	
2016-03-25	Nygaards Plads Brøndby, Denmark	19	Open	



## CAR PARK FIRES *(from 2001 with more than 10 cars involved in the fire)*

Date	Location	Burned cars	Construction type	Notes
2016-03-25	Nygaards Plads Brøndby, Denmark	19	Open	
2016-08-03	Dance Festival Andanças, Portugal	422	Open air	
2016-08-15	West Car Park at Boomtown Fair Festival, Winchester, Hampshire, UK	82	Open air	
2017-04-16	Von Lingens Väg Malmö, Sweden	30	Closed	
2018-01-01	Echo Arena, Liverpool, UK	1400	Open	to be demolished
2018-09-17	Kings Plaza Shopping Center, Brooklyn, NY, US	120	Closed	
2019-01-31	Newark Liberty airport, New Jersey, US	17	Open air	
2019-09-02	Douglas Village Shopping Mall, Cork, IE	60	Open	
09-01-2020	Stavanger airport, Norway	300	Open	steel structure collapsed



## CAR PARK FIRE-INDUCED COLLAPSE

*STAVANGER AIRPORT CAR PARK, 9 January 2020*



[https://www.reddit.com/r/pics/comments/elyojq/one\\_car\\_catched\\_fire\\_on\\_a\\_parking\\_on\\_an\\_airport/](https://www.reddit.com/r/pics/comments/elyojq/one_car_catched_fire_on_a_parking_on_an_airport/)





## OUTLINE

- *Recent major fires*
- *Design shortcomings*
  - *Design fires*



# DESIGN FIRES

## POST-FO FIRES

*(limited compartment size and ventilation)*

## LOCAL FIRE

*(large, well-ventil. areas)*

a

### NOMINAL

STANDARD FIRE  
*(+ RESISTANCE CLASS)*

assumed  
time limit

b

### ANALYTICAL

PARAMETRIC FIRE  
*( $q, b, O$ )*

assumed  
compartment proper.

c

### NUMERICAL/EXPER.

CFD SIMULATION  
*(based on experim. HRR)*

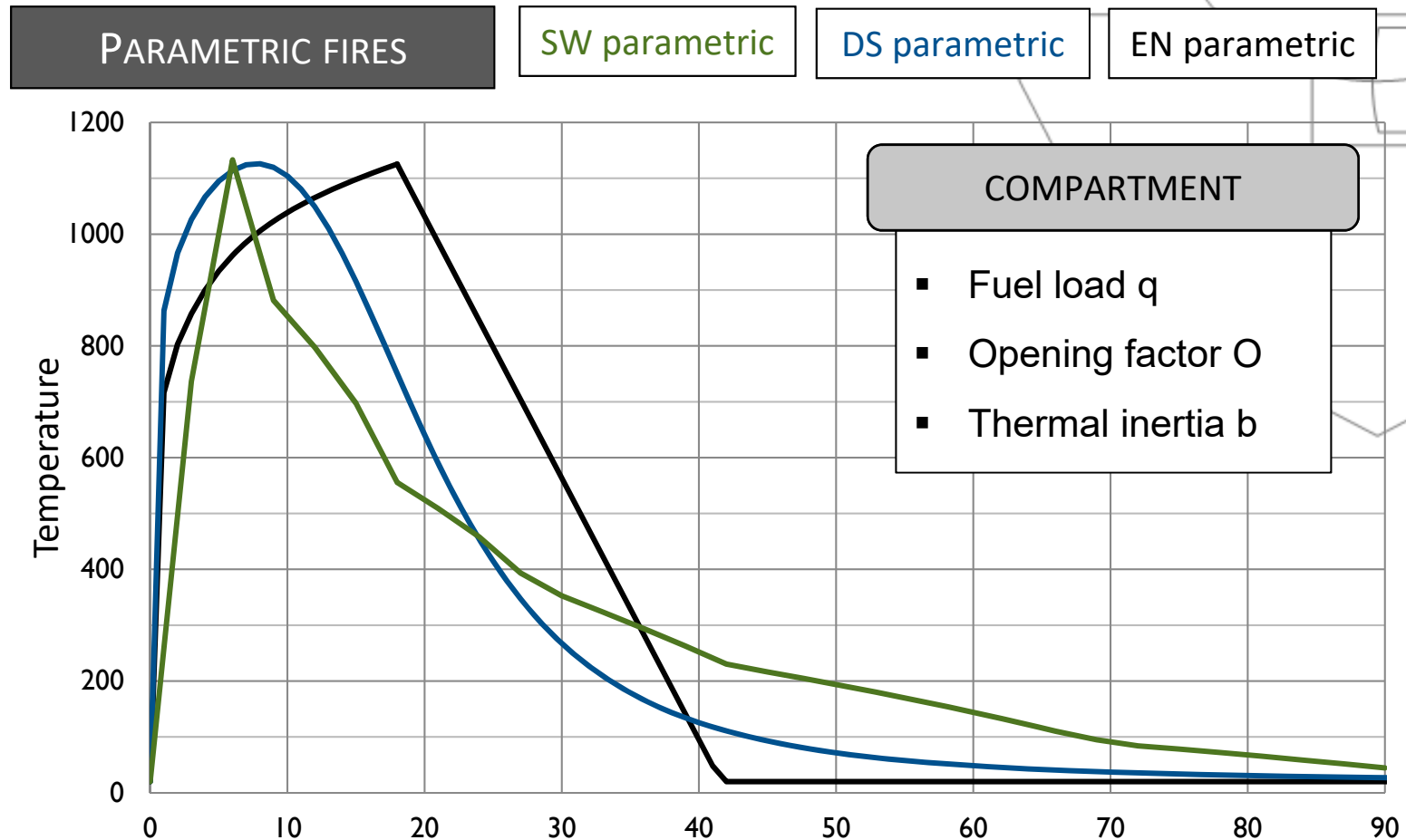
assumed  
fire spread



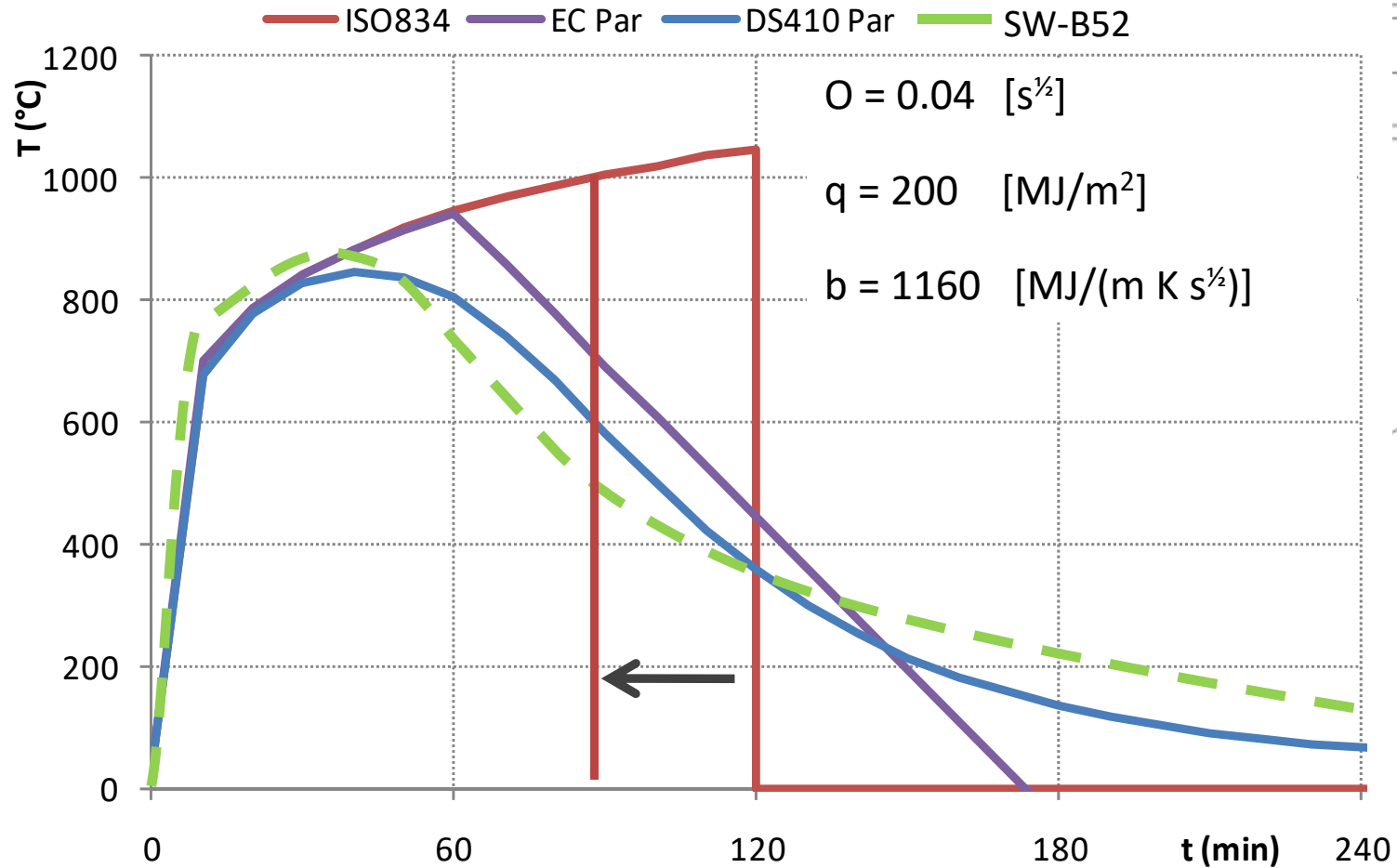
*SW Fire: Petterson&al.: "Fire engineering design of steel structures", Lund University, 1976*

*EN Fire: EN1991-1-2 Eurocode 1; DS Fire: DS/EN1991-1-2 DK NA, "Danish National Annex to Eurocode 1*

## DESIGN FIRES: parametric fires

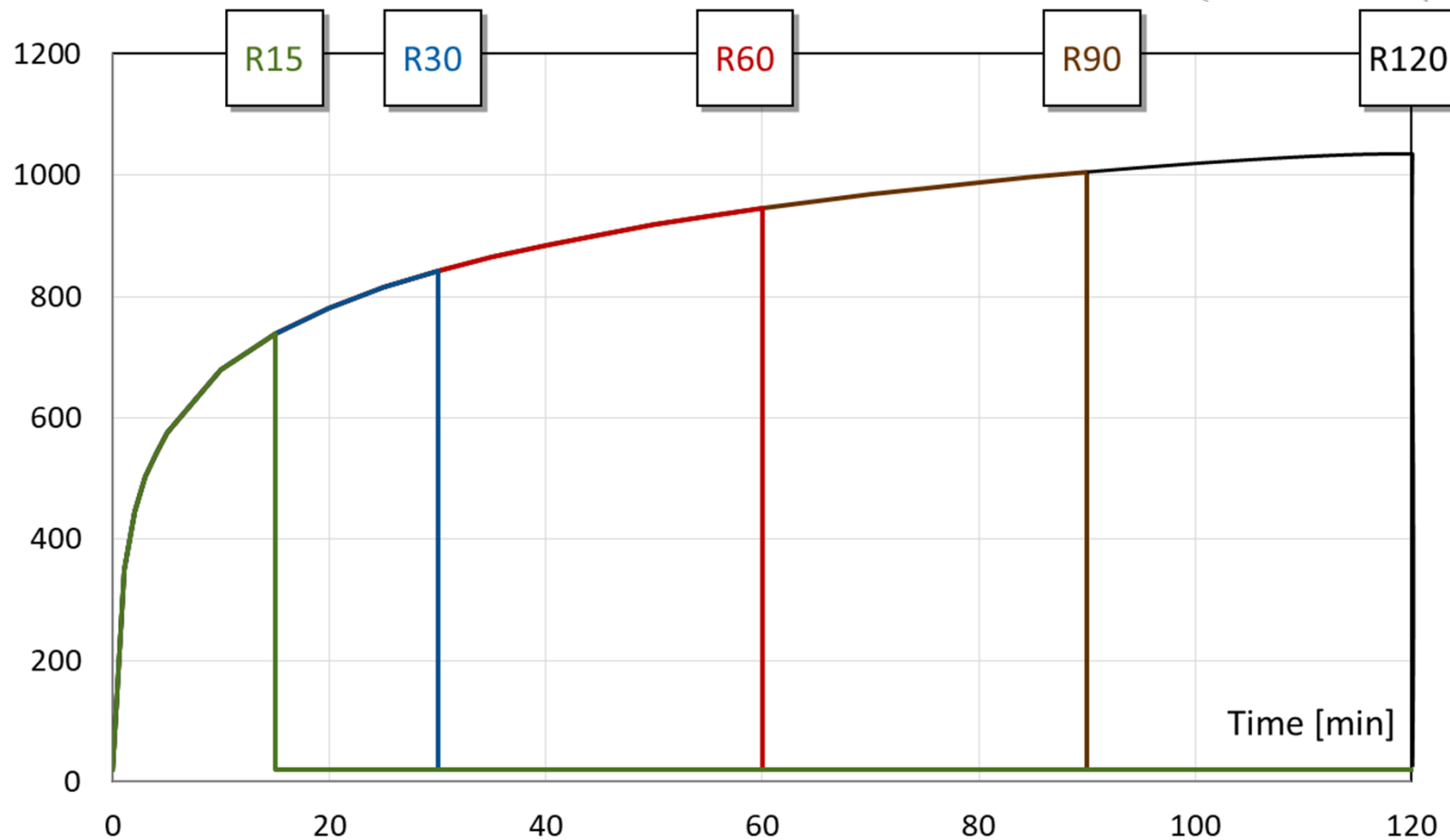


# DESIGN FIRES: standard fire and resistance class





## DESIGN FIRES: standard fire and resistance class



## DESIGN FIRES: resistance classes in Europe

Occupancy		B	CH	D	F	I	L	NL	FIN	E	UK
small-size offices	sprinkler	60	0-30	-	60	60	90	60	60	60	30
	no sprinkler	60	-	90	60	60	90	60	60	60	60
medium-size offices	sprinkler	120	60-90	-	120	90	90	60	120	120	120
	no sprinkler	120	90	90	120	90	120	90	120	120	0
schools	sprinkler	60	0-30	-	60	60	90	60	60	60	60
	no sprinkler	60	90	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
hospitals	sprinkler	120	60	-	60	120	90-120	120	60	120	90
	no sprinkler	120	90	90	60	120	120	120	60	120	90
car parks	closed	120	60	90	30-90	90	60	-	60	90	120
	open	60	0	0	30-90	90	90	60	60	90	15*



\*Side open car park less than 30 m high (Approved Document B, 2006)

*Use of uninsulated steel is possible!*



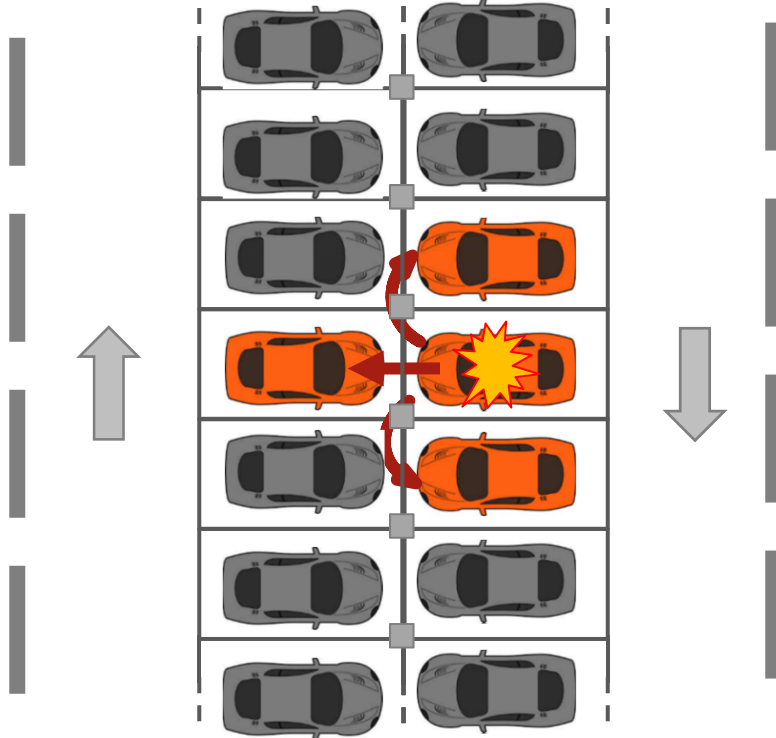
*Ref.: Schleich et al.: "Development of design rules for steel structures subjected to natural fires in closed car parks, European Commission Report, EUR 18867, Brussels, Belgium, 1999*

## DESIGN FIRES: numerical/experimental

Fire scenario: local fire

CTICM LARGE SCALE TEST

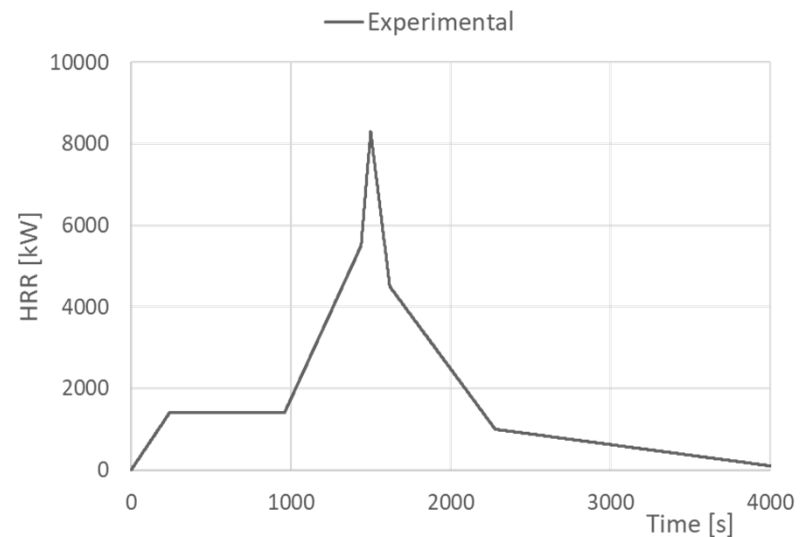
3-4 cars, 12 min one car to another



Fire load: experimental HRR

CALORIMETRIC HOOD TEST

- Lower ventilation & thermal feedback from ceiling
- New cars (higher energy content)
- Alternative fuels (batteries, hydrogen)



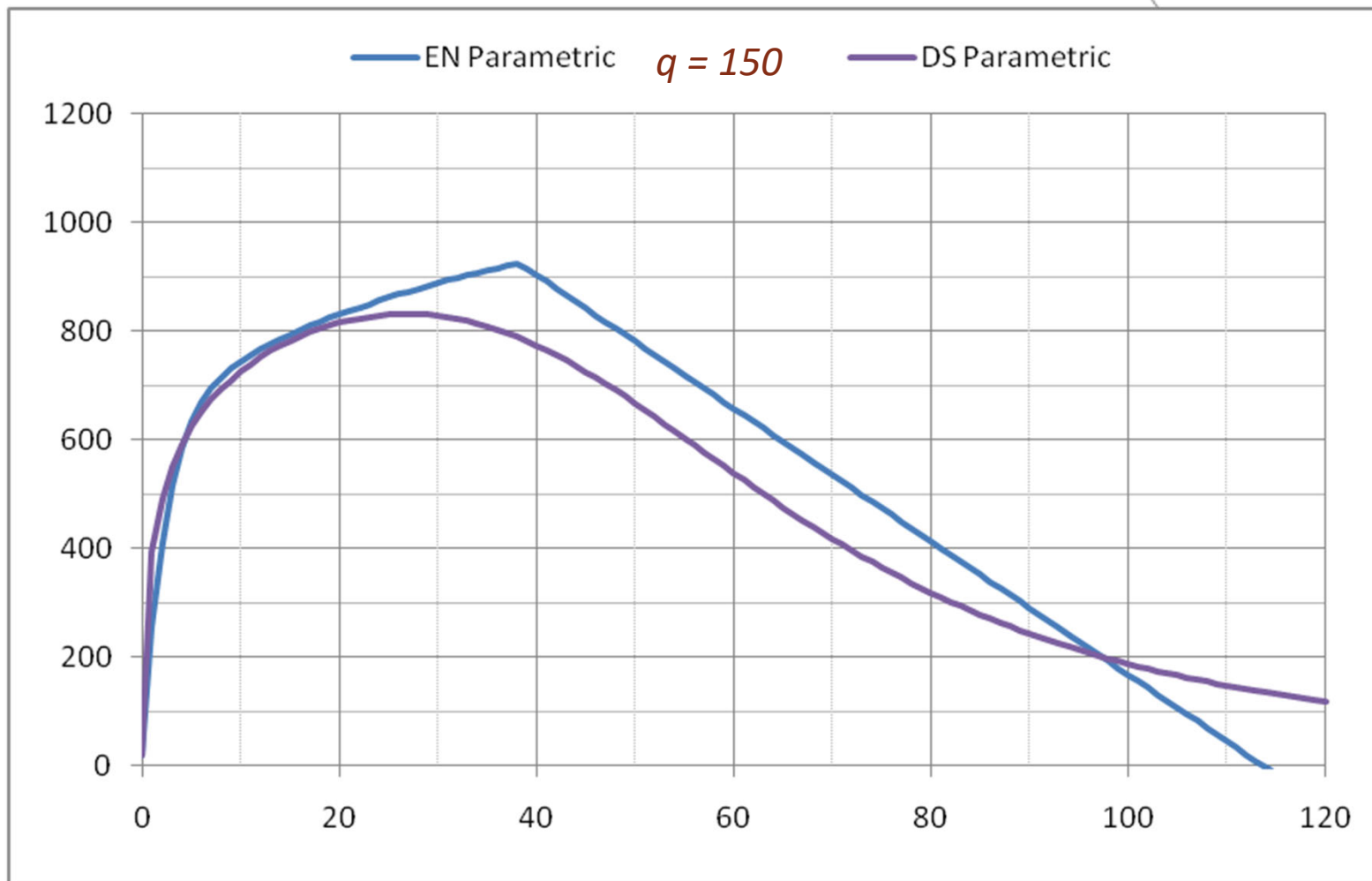
## DESIGN FIRES: fuel load

Year	1995	2007	2018	2018 (EV)
Car (1 ton)	7.5 GJ <sup>(1)</sup>	8.5 GJ <sup>(1)</sup>	10.5 GJ <sup>(2)</sup>	10.5 GJ <sup>(2)</sup>
Gasoline (40 l)	1.5 GJ	1.5 GJ	1.5 GJ	
Battery (64 kWh)				4.5 GJ <sup>(3)</sup>
<b>Total fuel load</b>	<b>9 GJ</b>	<b>10 GJ</b>	<b>12 GJ</b>	<b>15 GJ</b>

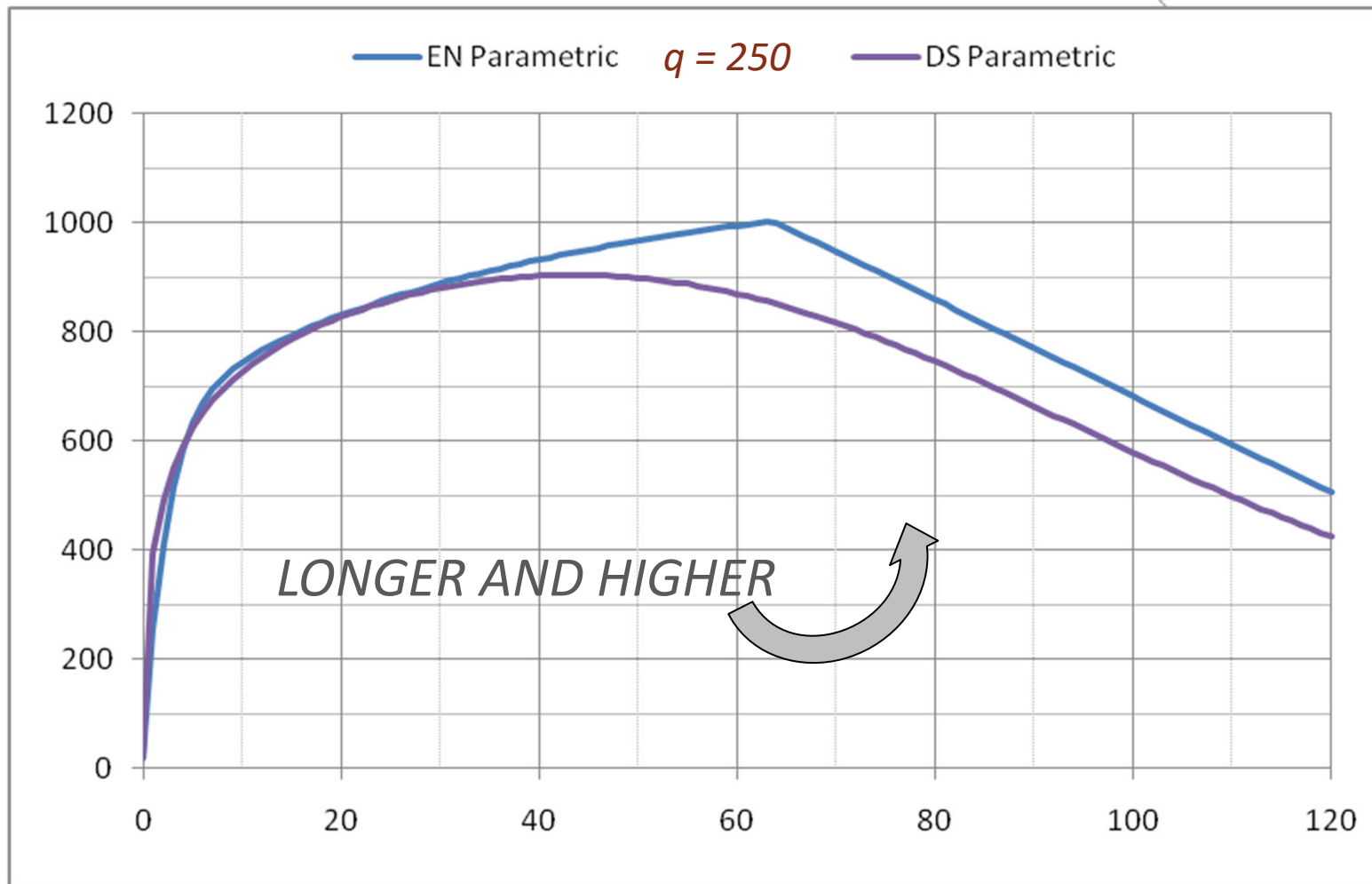
- (1) Christiansen T.: "Fire load on car parks (in Danish)," M.Sc. Thesis Report, Department of Civil Engineering, Technical University of Denmark, Lyngby, Denmark, 2007
- (2) Extrapolation based on fuel load increment in the previous years
- (4) Based on data presented in: Larsson F.: "Battery aspects on fires in electrified vehicles," in *Proc. of the 3rd Int. Conf. on Fire in Vehicles*, pp. 209-220, Berlin, Germany, October 2014.



## DESIGN FIRES: fuel load



## DESIGN FIRES: fuel load

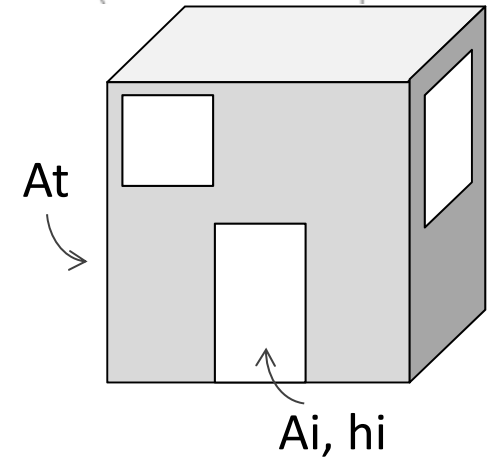


Source: Huizinga et al.: "Effect of triple glazing [...] on [...] fire safety", IFireSS 2017, Naples, Italy, June 7-9, 2017

## DESIGN FIRES: ventilation

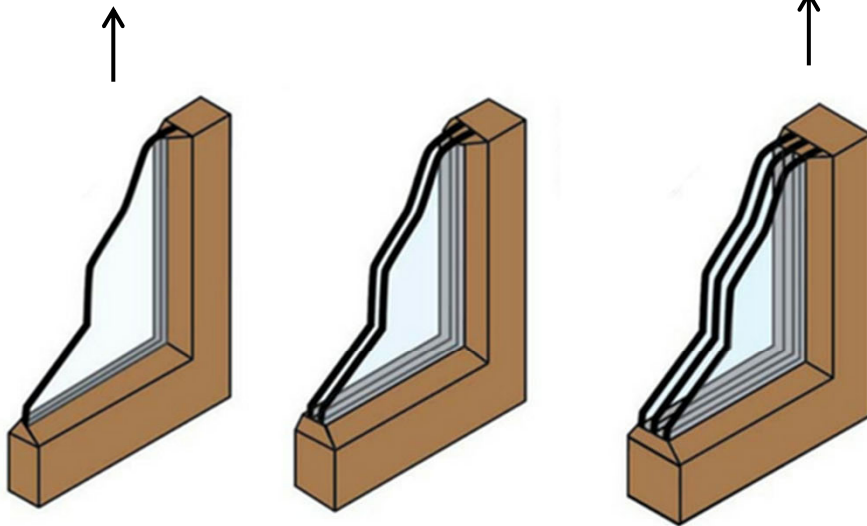
Opening factor:  $O = A \sqrt{h_{av}} / A_t$  [ $m^{1/2}$ ]

$$A = \sum_i A_i \quad \leftarrow \quad \begin{array}{l} \downarrow \\ \downarrow \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{l} \downarrow \\ \downarrow \end{array} \quad h_{av} = \sum_i A_i h_i / A$$

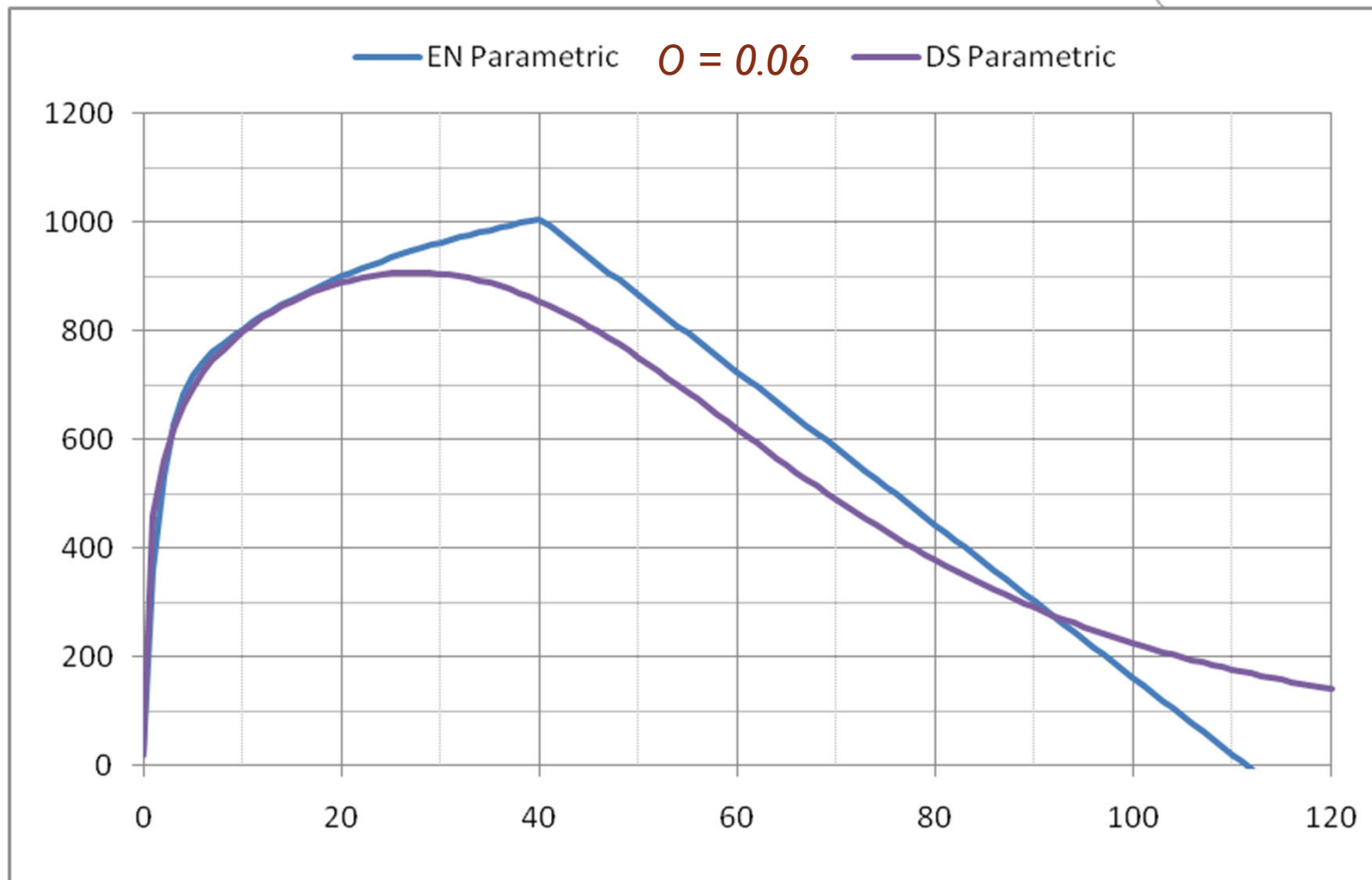


*BREAK BEFORE FO*

*MAY NOT BREAK*

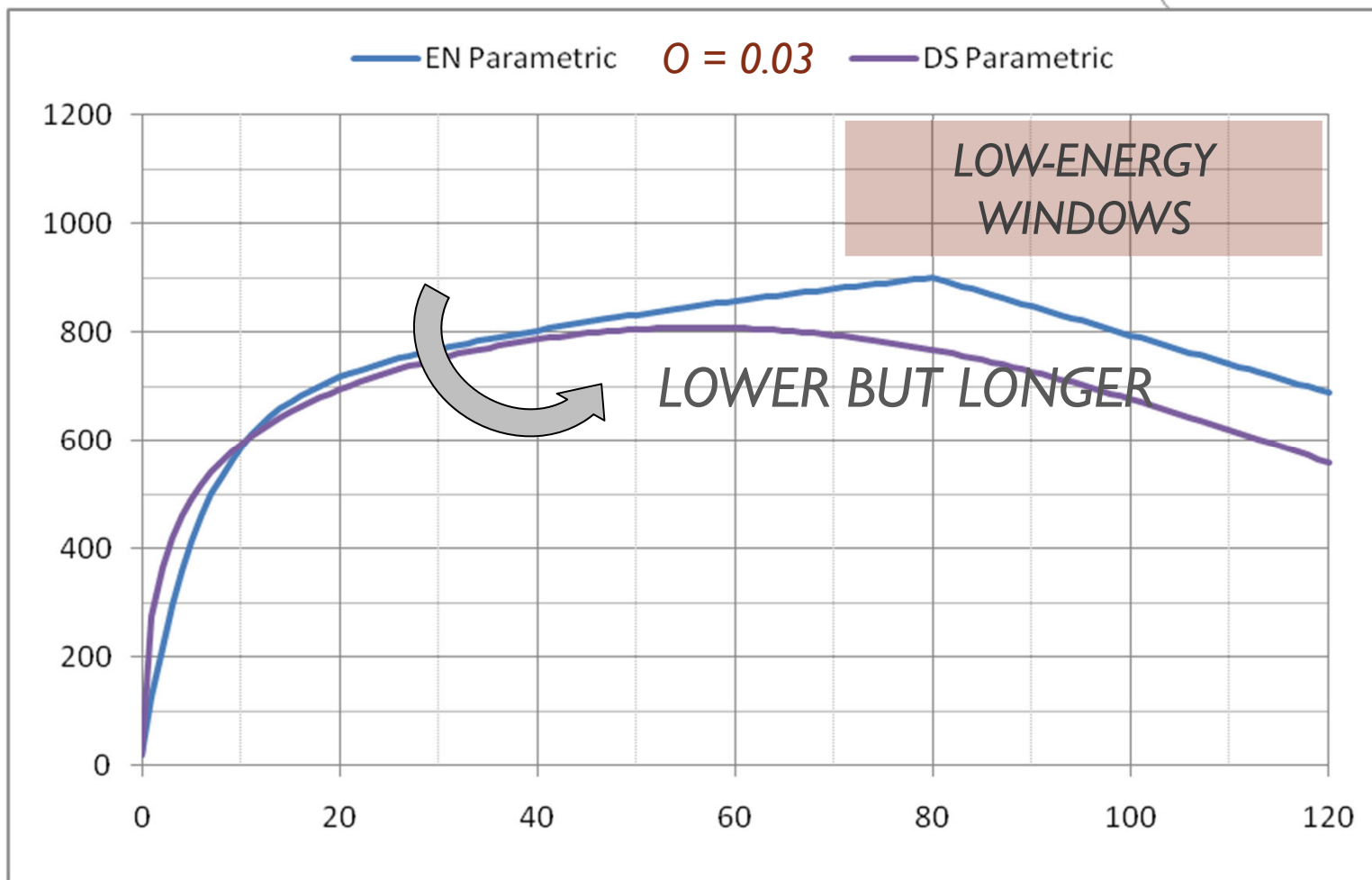


## DESIGN FIRES: ventilation

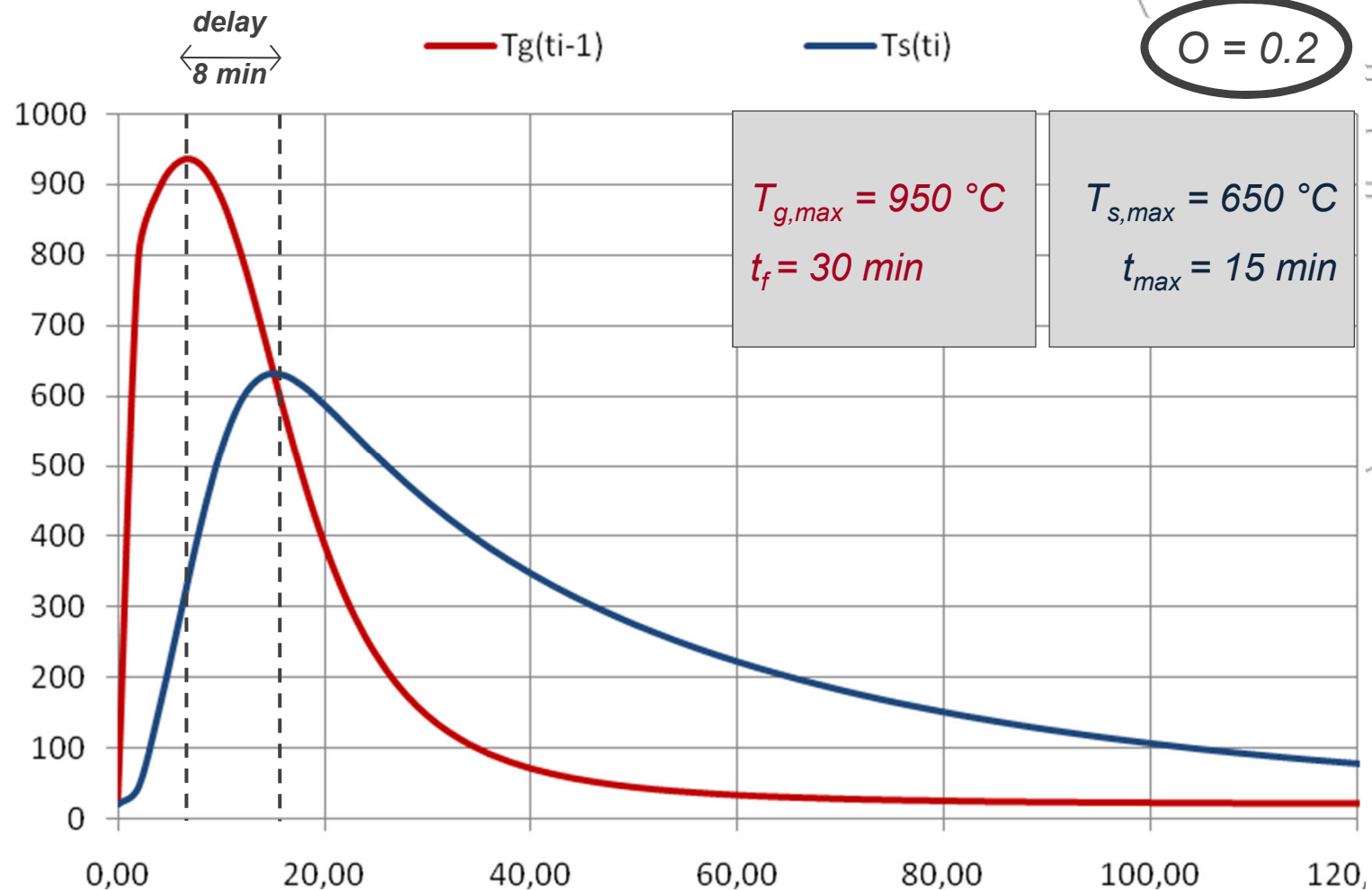




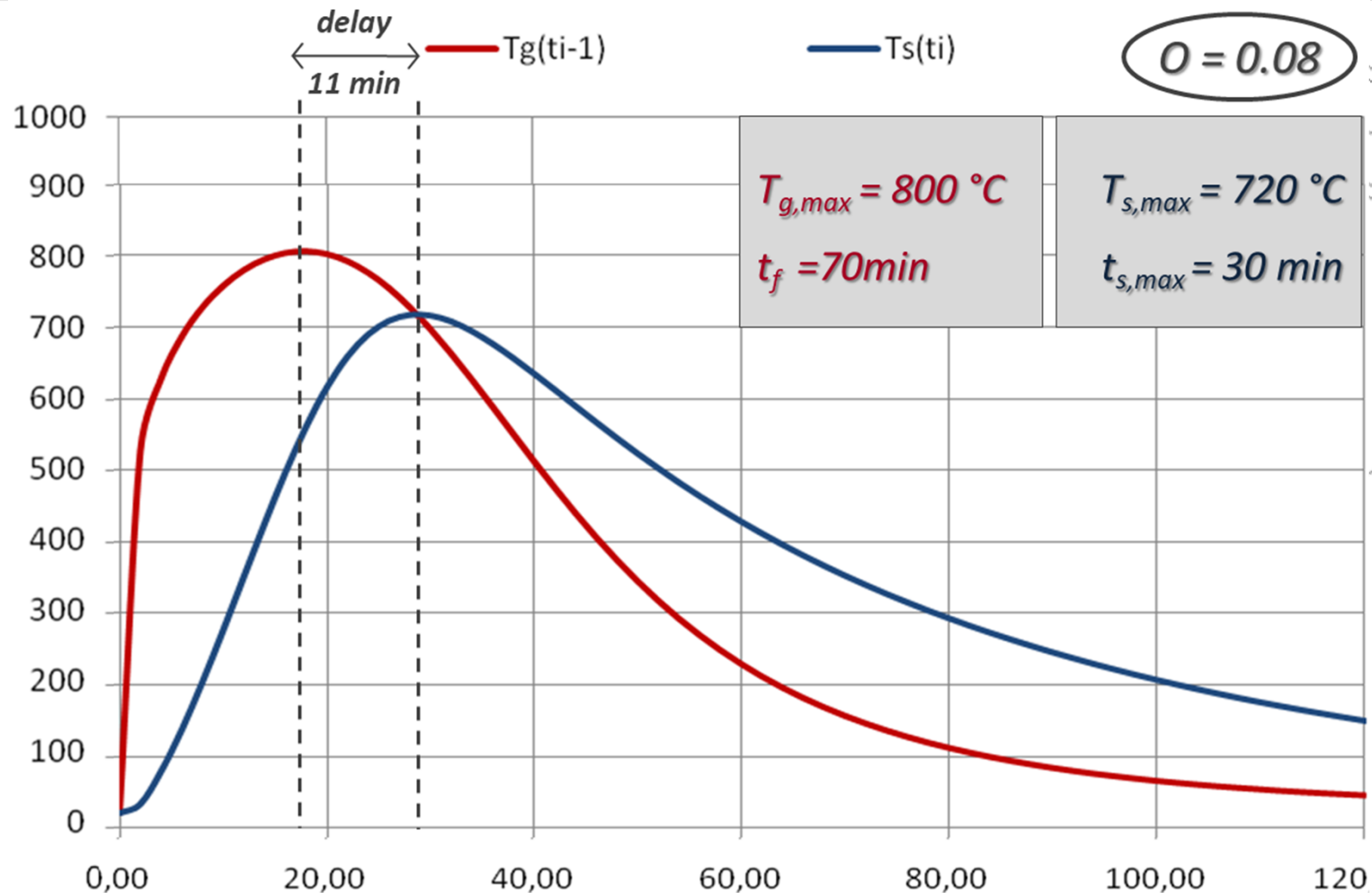
## DESIGN FIRES: ventilation



## DESIGN FIRES: ventilation



## DESIGN FIRES: ventilation



Source: Petterson&al.: "Fire engineering design of steel structures", Lund University, 1976

## DESIGN FIRES: thermal inertia

Thermal inertia:  $b = \sqrt{\rho c \lambda}$  [W s<sup>1/2</sup> K<sup>-1</sup> m<sup>-2</sup>]

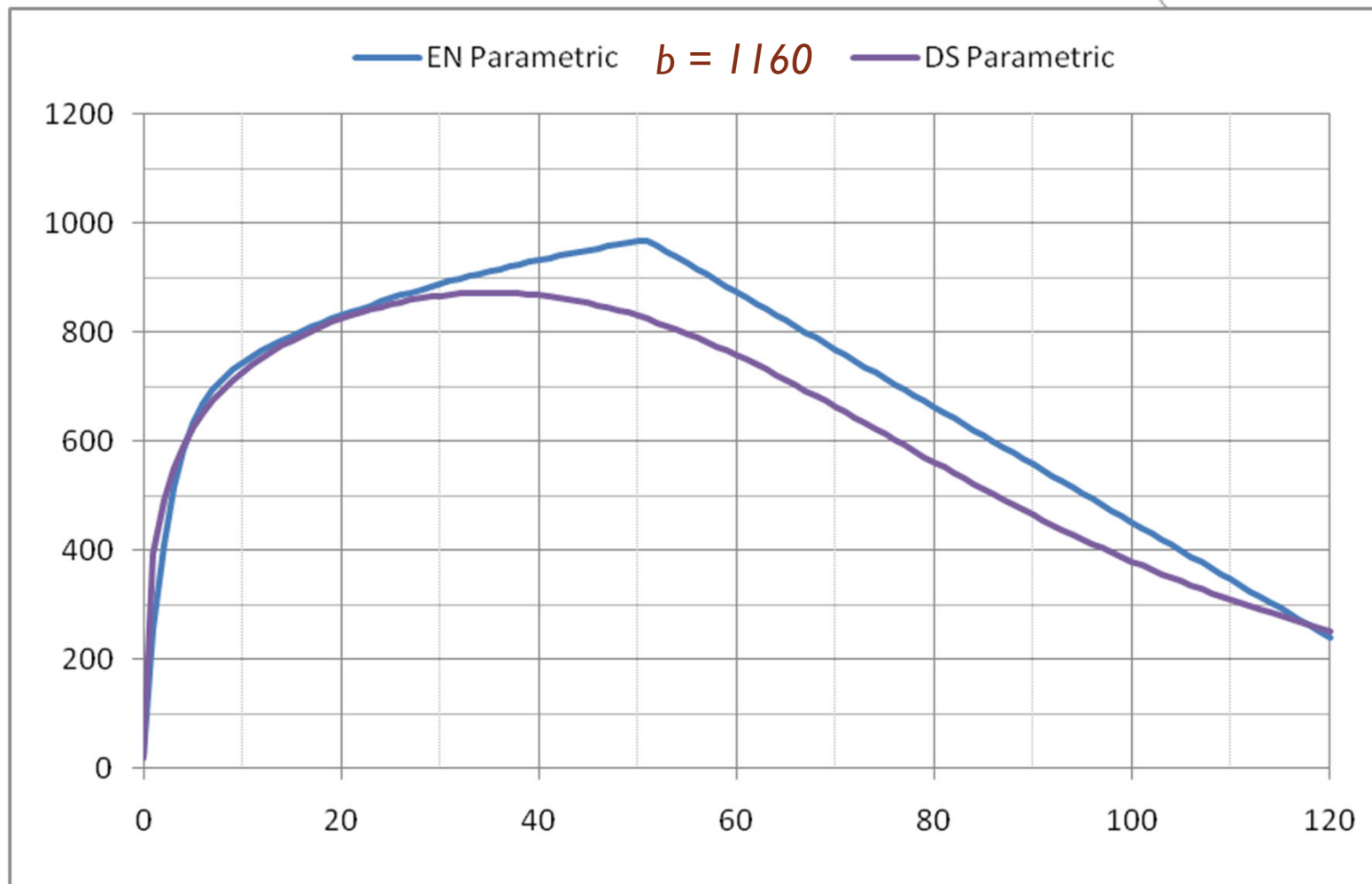
density ← ↓ → conductivity  
 specific heat capacity

Compartment type	Material	b [Ws <sup>1/2</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> m <sup>-2</sup> ]
A (standard)	Concrete, brick, lightweight concrete	1160
C	50% concrete, 50% lightweight concrete	860
G	20% concrete, 80% two gypsum plaster boards with air gap in-between	800
E	50% lightweight concrete, 33% concrete, 17% insulating sandwich panel (gypsum, mineral wool, brickwork)	773
H	Two steel sheets with 100 mm mineral wool in-between	386

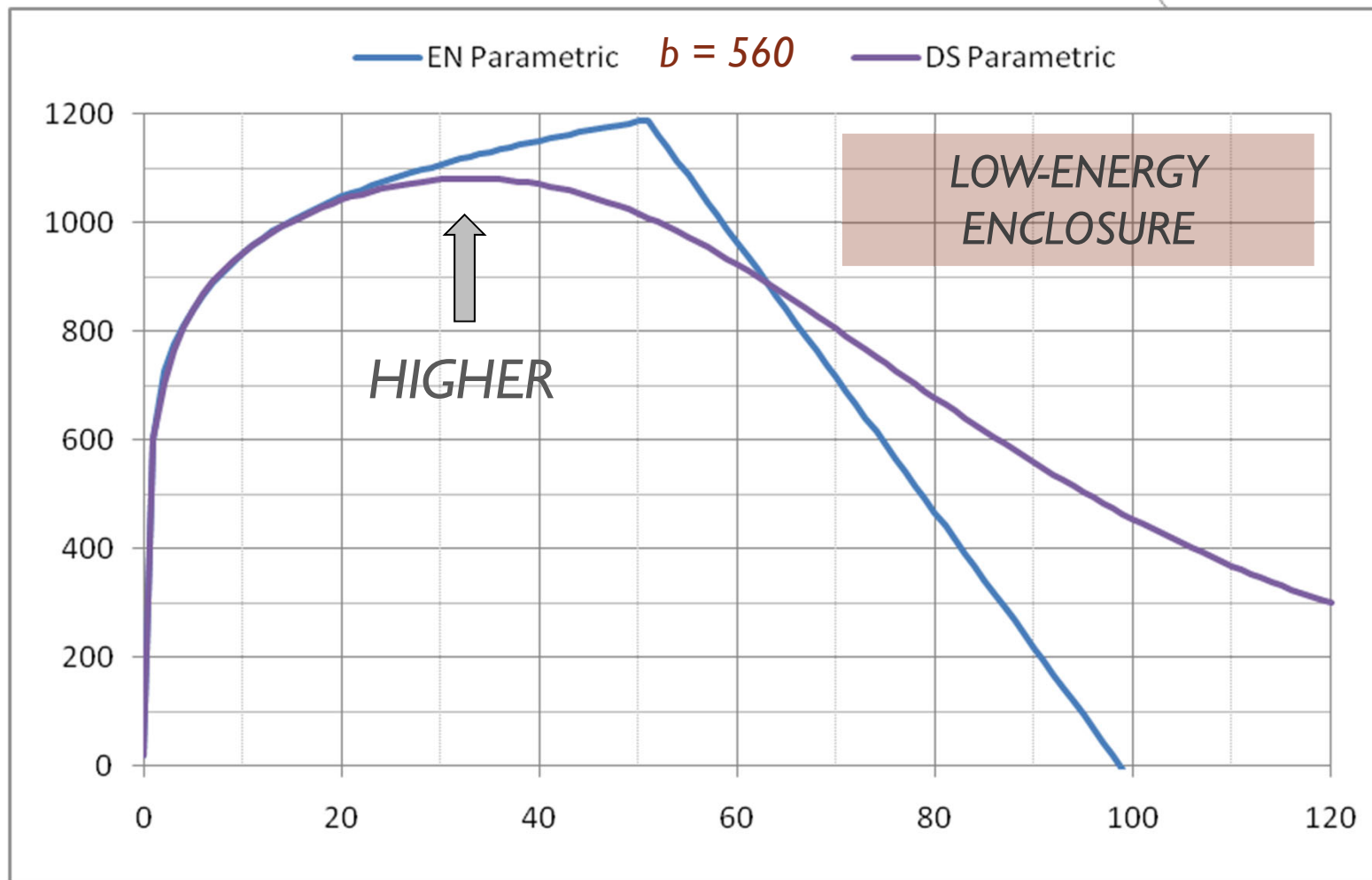
INSULATION



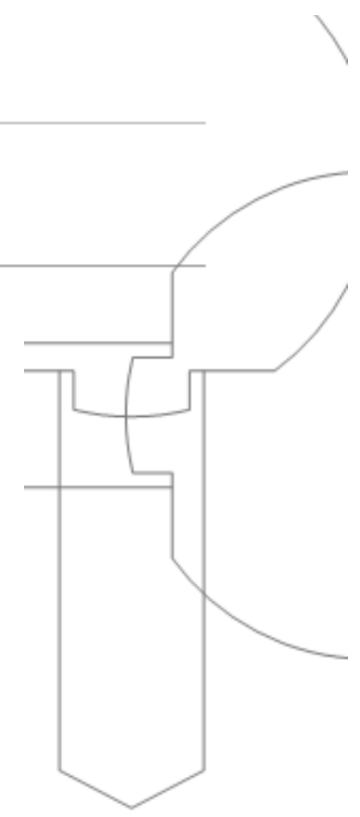
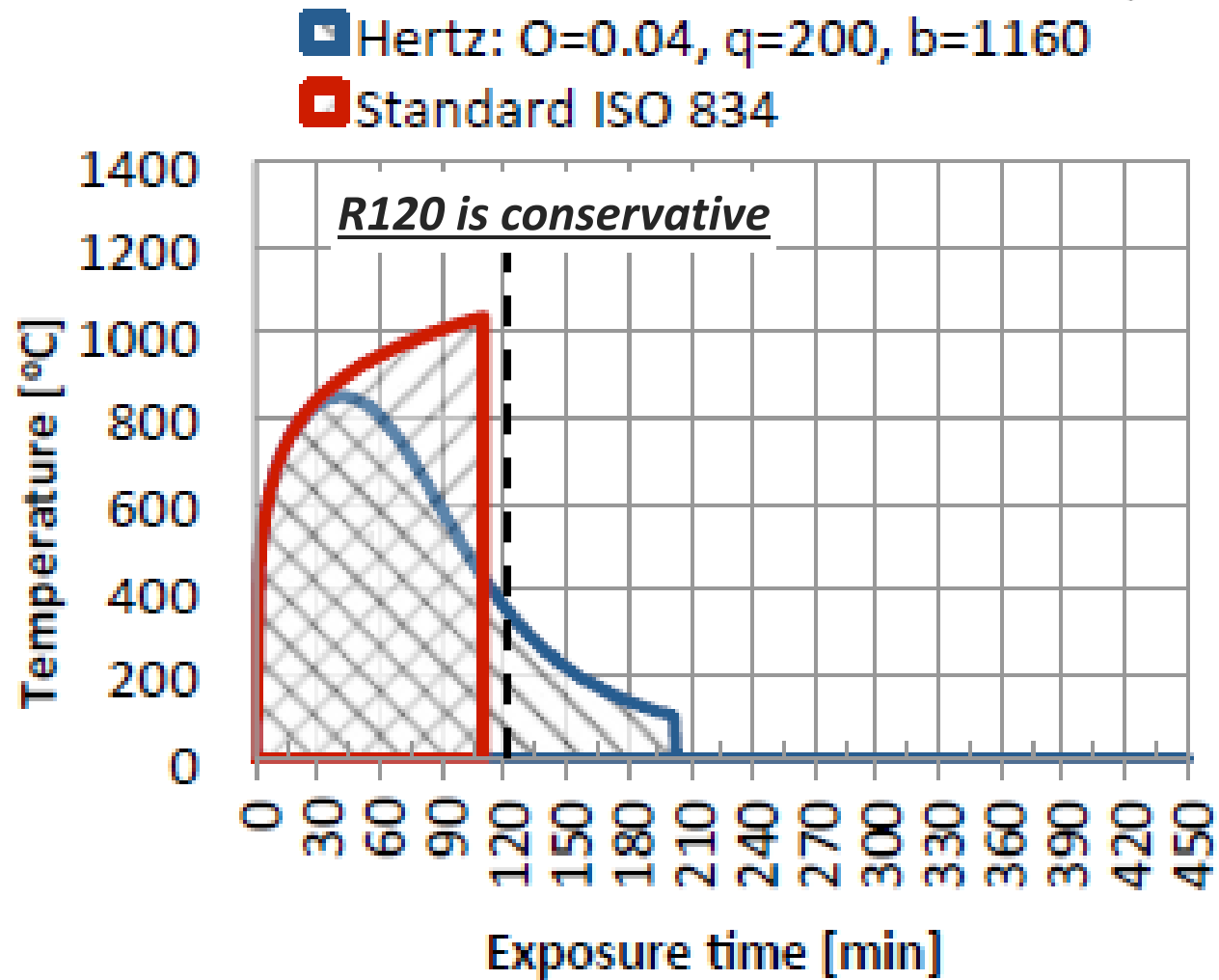

## DESIGN FIRES: thermal inertia



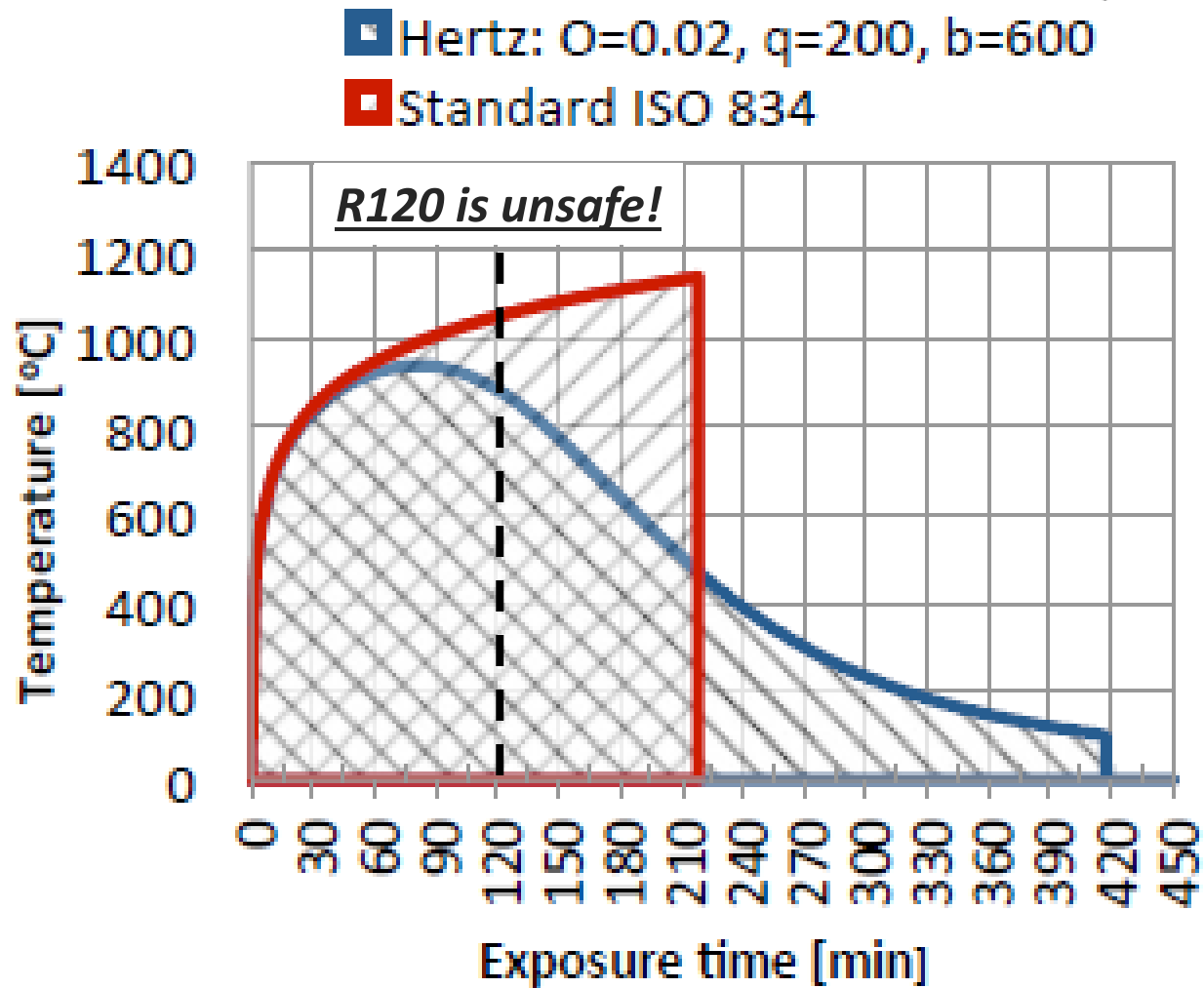
## DESIGN FIRES: thermal inertia



## DESIGN FIRES: old compartment



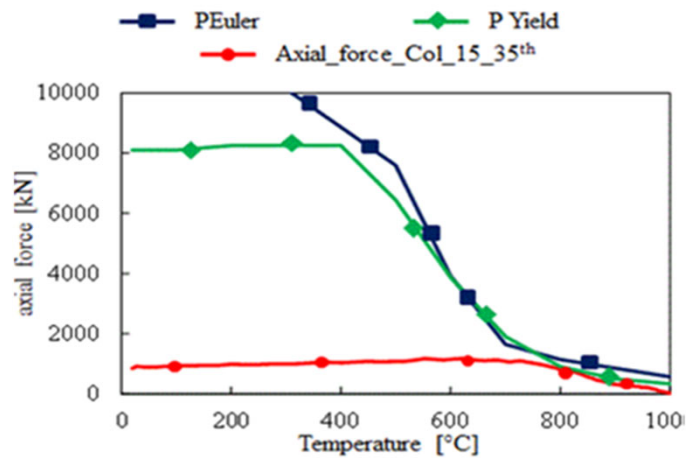
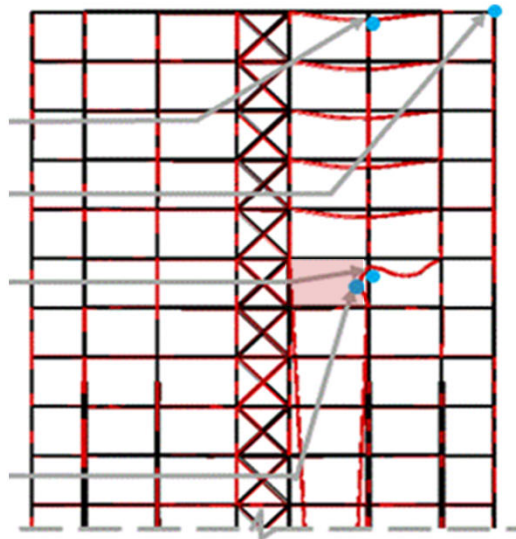
## DESIGN FIRES: old compartment





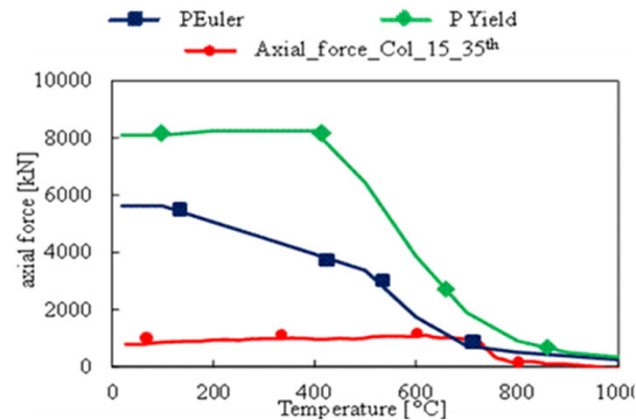
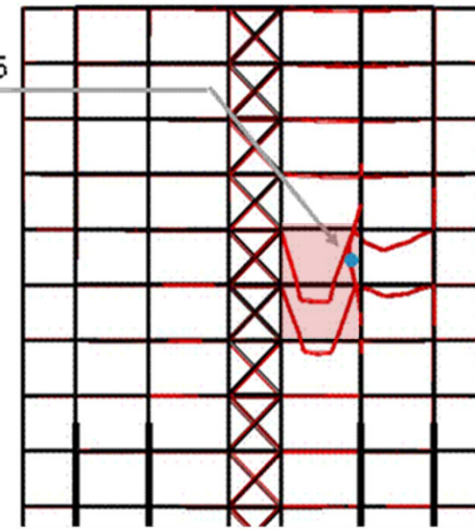
## DESIGN FIRES: vertical fire spread in buildings

Fire at 35<sup>th</sup>  
floor



Col 15

Fire at  
35&36<sup>th</sup> floor



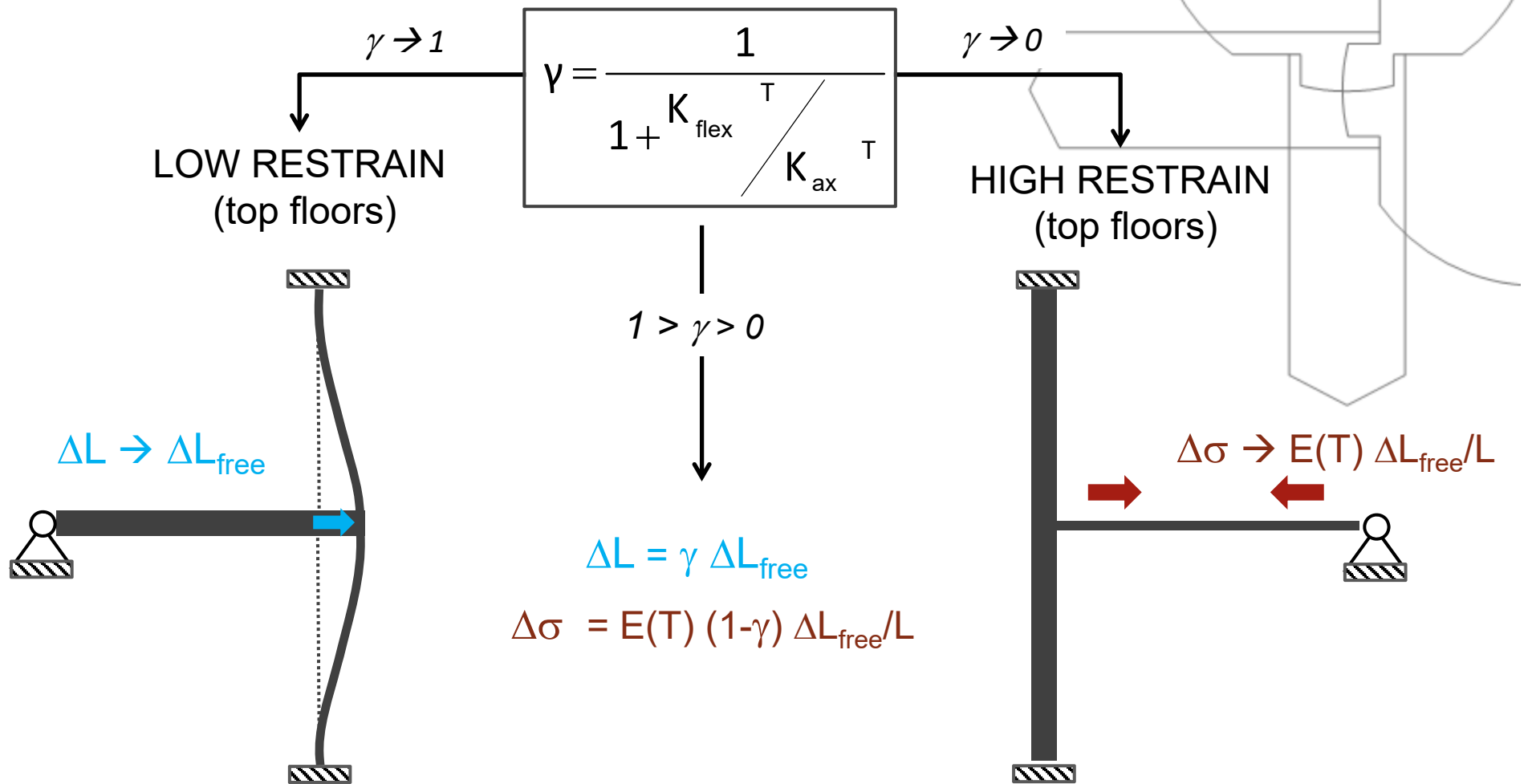


## OUTLINE

- *Recent major fires*
- *Design shortcomings*
  - *Design fires*
  - *Structural design*



# STRUCTURAL DESIGN: degree of expansion



Source: EN1991-1-2: Actions on structures exposed to fire, Brussels, Belgium, 2002

## STRUCTURAL DESIGN: hindered thermal expansion

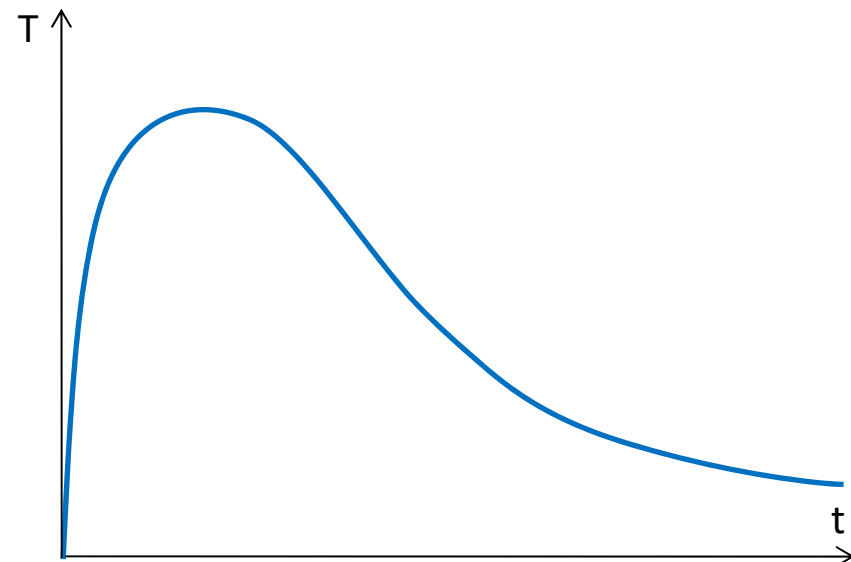
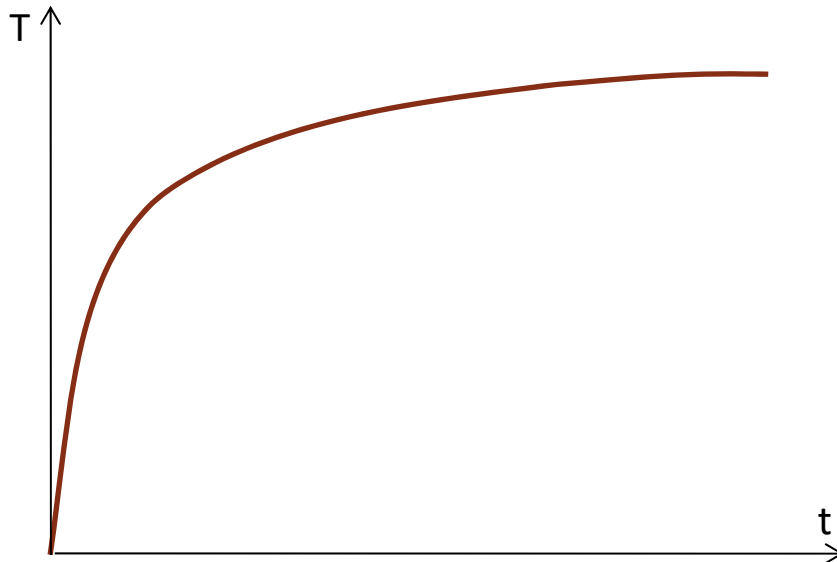
### INDIRECT STRESSES

CAN BE DISREGARDED

MUST BE CONSIDERED

$\Delta\sigma_{\text{eigen}} = \text{neglected}$

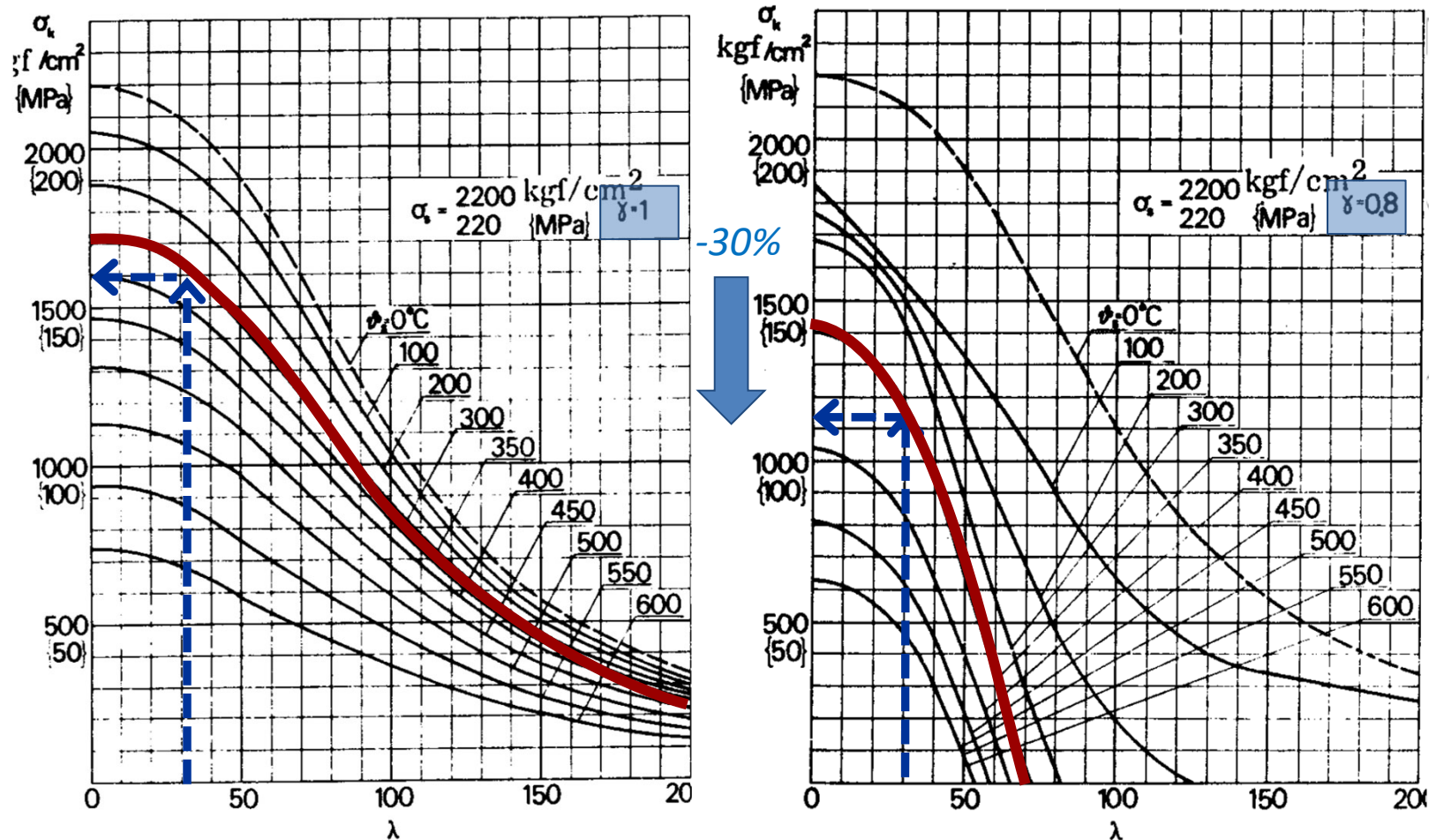
$$\Delta\sigma_{\text{eigen}} = E^T (1 - \gamma) \frac{\Delta L^{\text{free}}}{L}$$



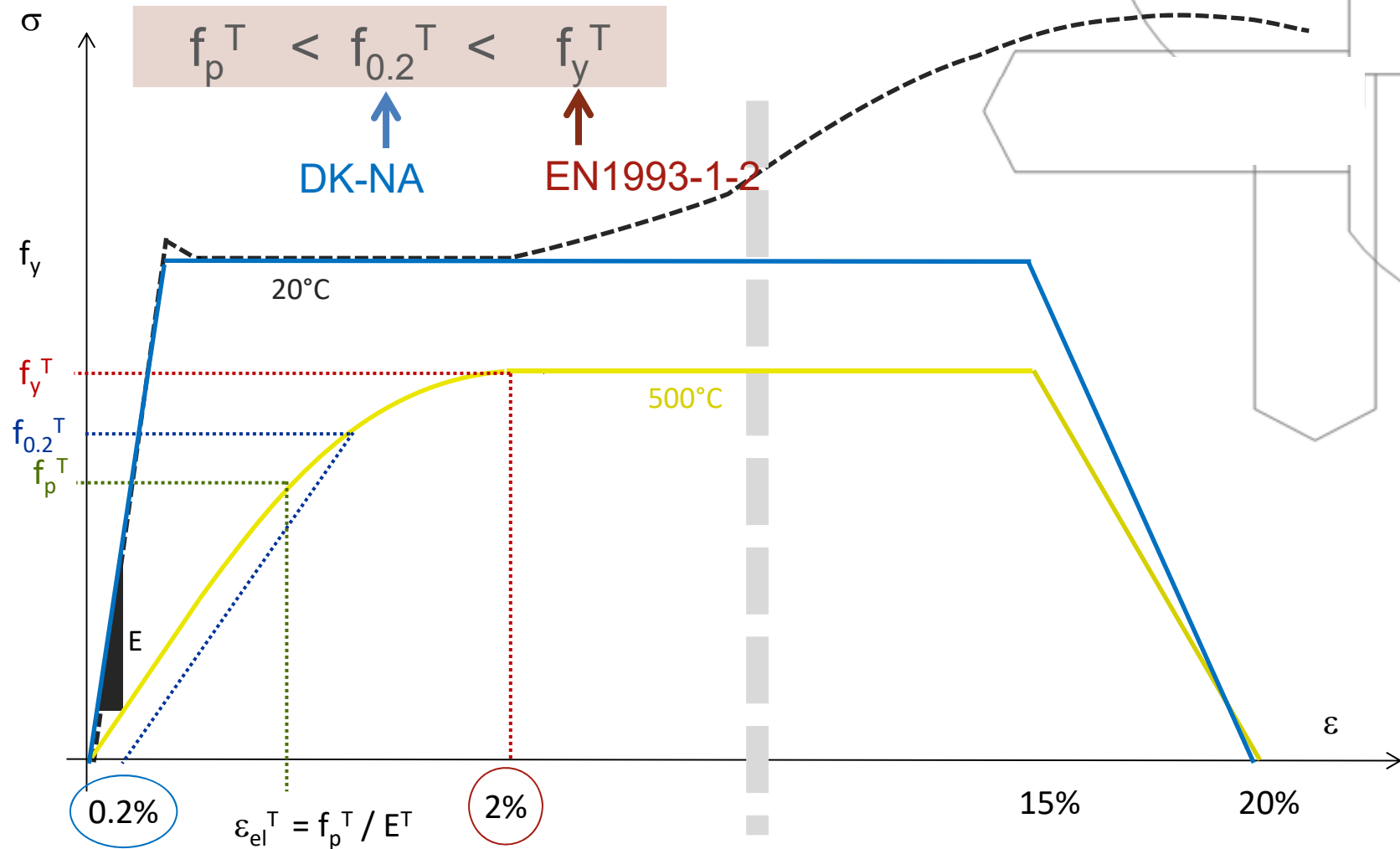
Source: Petterson & al.: "Fire engineering design of steel structures", Lund University, 1976

## STRUCTURAL DESIGN: hindered thermal expansion

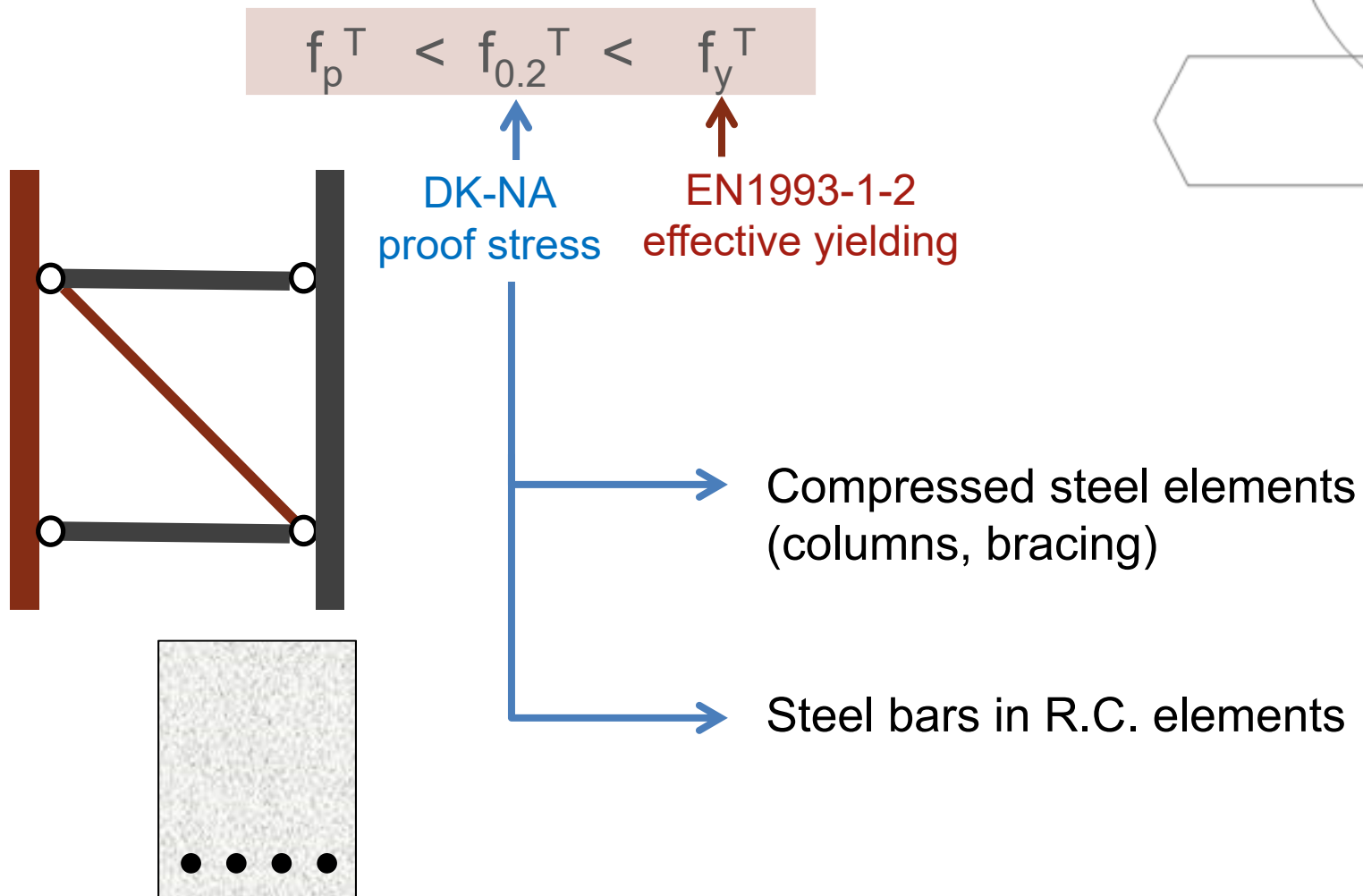
Axial capacity of steel columns hindered in expansion by a continuous beam



## STRUCTURAL DESIGN: mechanical properties



# STRUCTURAL DESIGN: mechanical properties



## STRUCTURAL DESIGN: cold condition

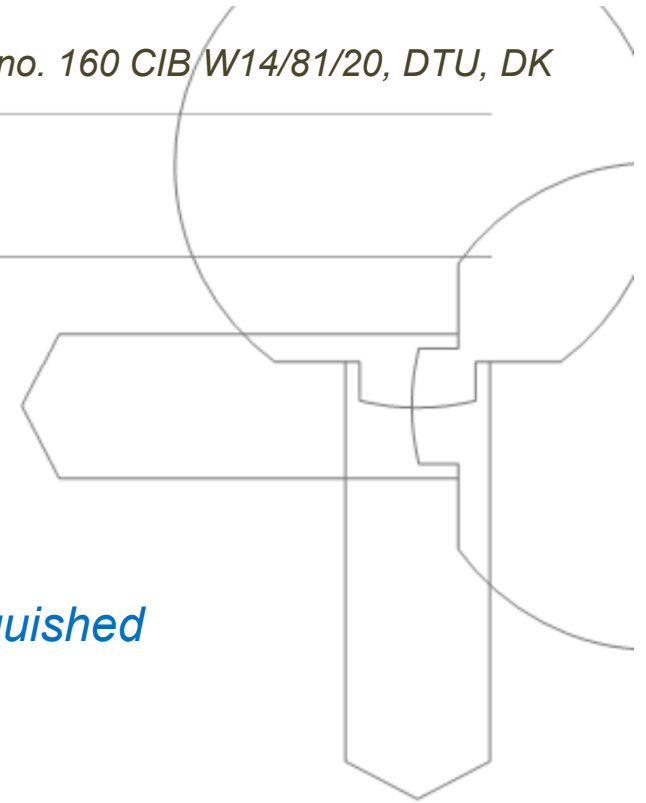
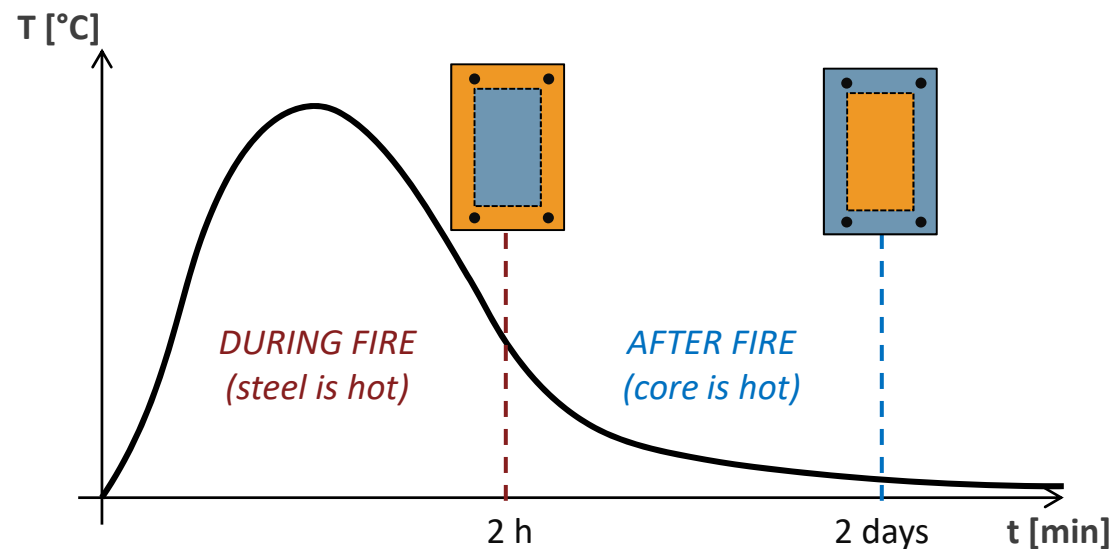
### I. DURING FIRE

Outer concrete and reinforcing bars are heated

### II. AFTER FIRE

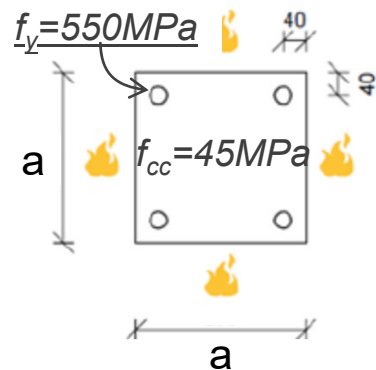
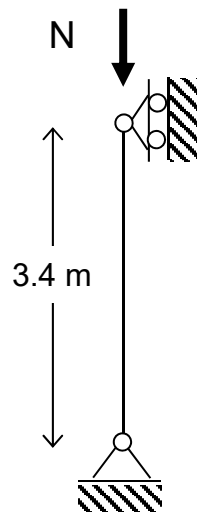
Concrete core is heated, outer bars are cooled down

→ *risk of collapse after the fire is extinguished*





## STRUCTURAL DESIGN: cold condition



FIRE $q=200$ [MJ/m <sup>2</sup> ]		OLD COMPARTMENT $O=0.04$ [m <sup>-1</sup> ] $b=1160$ [Ws <sup>0.5</sup> m <sup>-2</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> ]		NEW COMPARTMENT $O=0.02$ [m <sup>-1</sup> ] $b=600$ [Ws <sup>0.5</sup> m <sup>-2</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> ]	
a [mm]	Ø [mm]	$N_{cr,HOT}$ [kN]	$N_{cr,COLD}$ [kN]	$N_{cr,HOT}$ [kN]	$N_{cr,COLD}$ [kN]
200	10	550	350	190	150
300	15	2'220	1'650	1'410	1'060
400	20	4'950	3'910	3'680	2'870
500	20	11'070	9'140	9'150	7'410

$N_{cr,HOT} \rightarrow 36\%$  overestimation

+ old comp.  $\rightarrow > 100\%$  overestimation



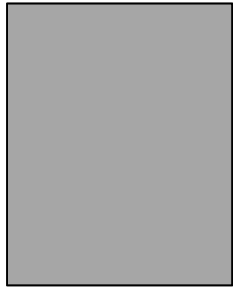


## OUTLINE

- *Recent major fires*
- *Design shortcomings*
  - *Design fire and design loads*
  - *Structural design*
  - *Design process*

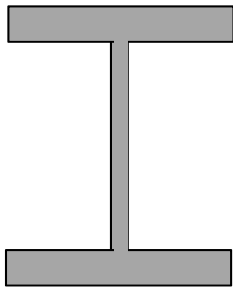


## Design process: optimization and fire verification



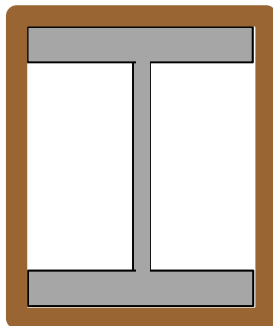
### 1. PREDIMENSIONING

Ultimate Limit State (ULS) - Sectional failure



### 2. OPTIMIZATION IN SERVICE

Service Limit State (SLS) - Elastic design



### 3. VERIFICATION IN FIRE

Accidental Limit State (ALS) - Non-collapse

*Optimization is lost when fire design is driving*



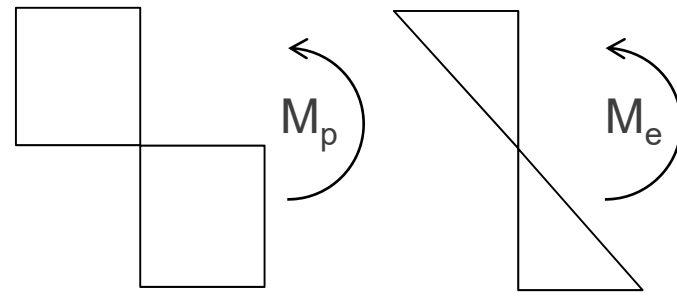
# Design process: optimization and fire verification

## STRUCTURAL RESPONSE

### PLASTIC BENEFIT

$$\beta = M_p / M_e$$

Plastic moment  $M_p$  Elastic moment  $M_e$



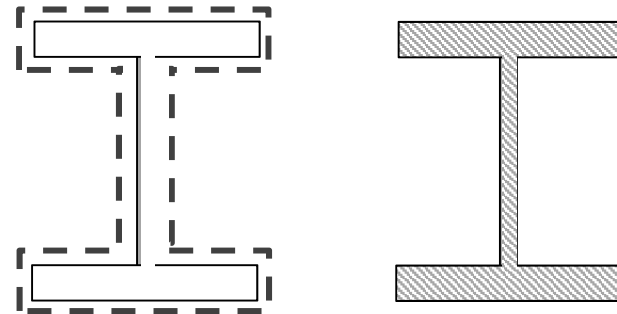
## THERMAL RESPONSE

### SECTION FACTOR

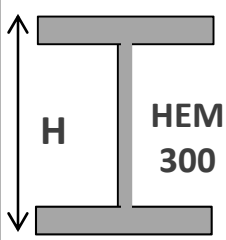
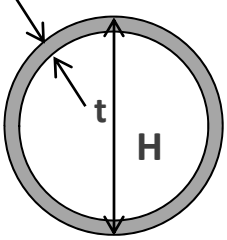
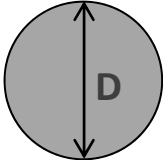
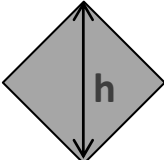
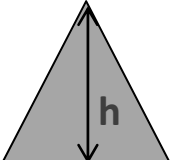
$$SF = A_{in} / V_s$$

Exposed surface  $A_{in}$

Steel volume  $V_s$



## Design process: optimization and fire verification

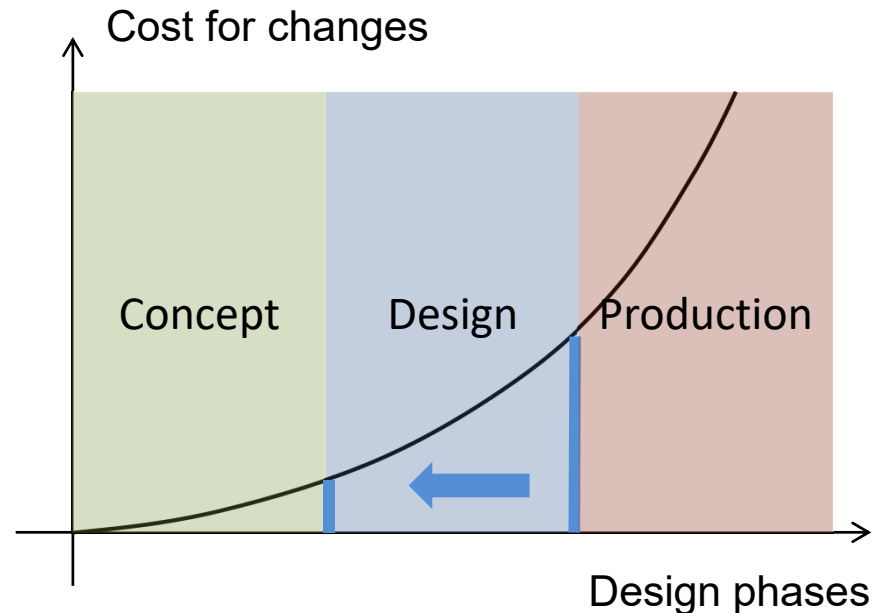
$A \sim 1.5E-2 \text{ m}^2$					
<b>PLASTIC MODULUS</b> $W_p = \beta W_e$	$1.8E-3 \text{ m}^3$	$7.9E-4 \text{ m}^3$	$4.1E-4 \text{ m}^3$	$4.1E-4 \text{ m}^3$	$9.7E-4 \text{ m}^3$
<b>SECTION FACTOR</b> per/ A	$\frac{2H+4B-2a}{Ha+2Bt-2ta}$ $\sim 123 \text{ m}^{-1}$	$\sim 1 / t$ $= 45 \text{ m}^{-1}$	$4 / D$ $= 30 \text{ m}^{-1}$	$4 \text{ sqr}(2) / h$ $= 33 \text{ m}^{-1}$	$6 / h$ $= 38 \text{ m}^{-1}$
<b>FIRE RESISTANCE</b> AT t = 30' $W_p(t) = \xi(t)W_p$	$1.2E-4 \text{ m}^3$	$1.1E-4 \text{ m}^3$	$2.1E-4 \text{ m}^3$	$1.4E-4 \text{ m}^3$	$2.3E-4 \text{ m}^3$

## Design process: optimization and fire verification

Traditional objective function: cost of steel

$$FO_{old} : C_s = \underbrace{V_s}_{\text{steel weight}} \cdot \rho_s \cdot \underbrace{p_s}_{\text{steel unitary cost}}$$

$$\text{B.C. (1)} : M_p \geq M_{s,ULS}$$



New objective function: cost of steel & insulation

$$FO_{new} = C_s + C_{in} = \underbrace{V_s}_{\text{steel weight}} \cdot \rho_s \cdot p_s + \underbrace{A_{in} \cdot d_{in}}_{\text{insulation weight}} \cdot \rho_{in} \cdot p_{in}$$

insulation unitary cost

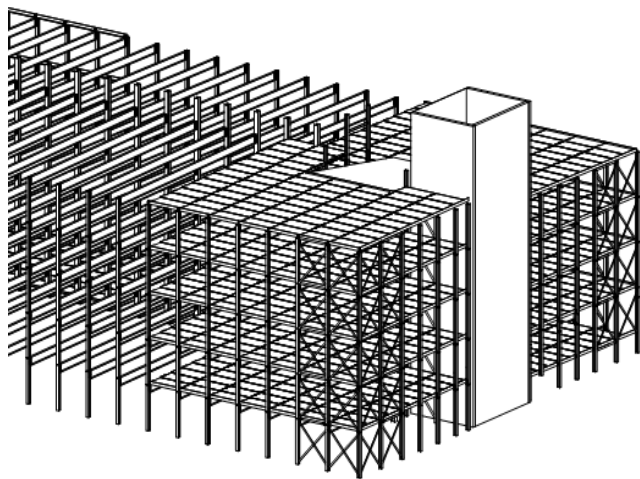
$$\text{B.C. (2)} : \xi(T_s) \cdot M_p \geq M_{s,fi}$$



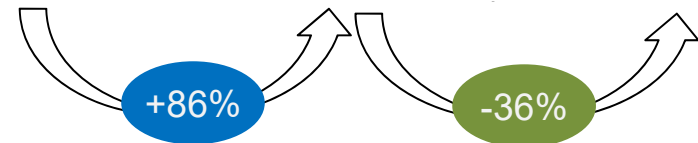
Source: Thaarup & Giuliani: "Optimized design of steel car parks for fully spread fires, NordicSteel 2019

## Design process: optimization and fire verification

### MULTI-STORY STEEL CAR PARK

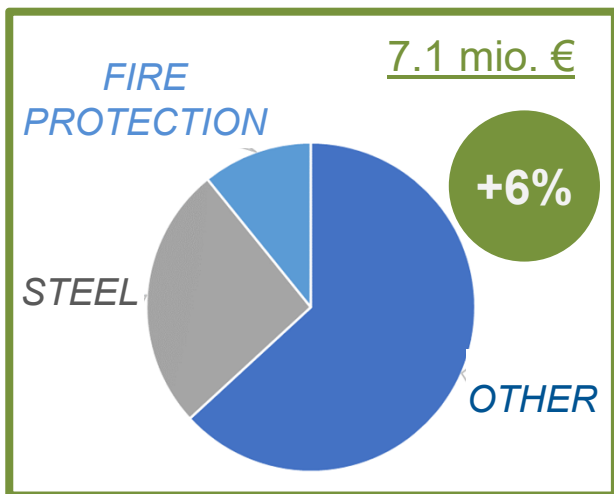
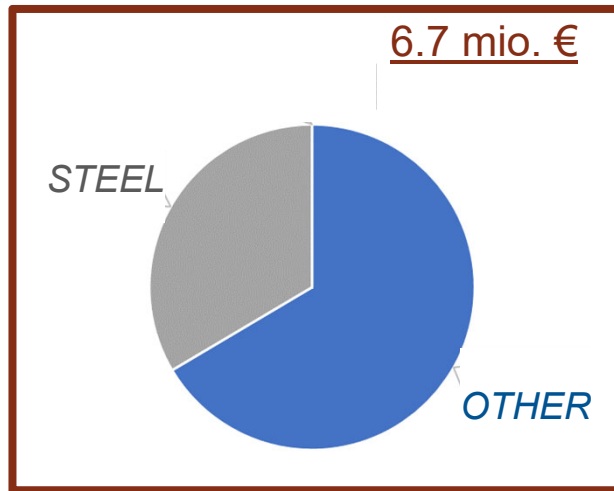


Design fire	Local fire	Fully developed	Fully developed early design stage
Profile	Unprotected	Protected	Protected
Element			
Beams	IPE550	IPE550	TPS 300x200x12.5
column type 1	HEA240	HEA240	CHS 139.7x12.5
column type 2	HEB240	HEB240	CHS 168.3x12.5
Tension bracings	FL80x8	FL80x8	FL80x8
Total cost (mio €)	2.251	4.200	2.682



Source: Thaarup & Giuliani: "Optimized design of steel car parks for fully spread fires, NordicSteel 2019"

## Design process: optimization and fire verification



Design fire	Local fire	Fully developed	Fully developed early design stage
Profile	Unprotected	Protected	Protected
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column type 1	HEA240	HEA240	CHS 139.7x12.5
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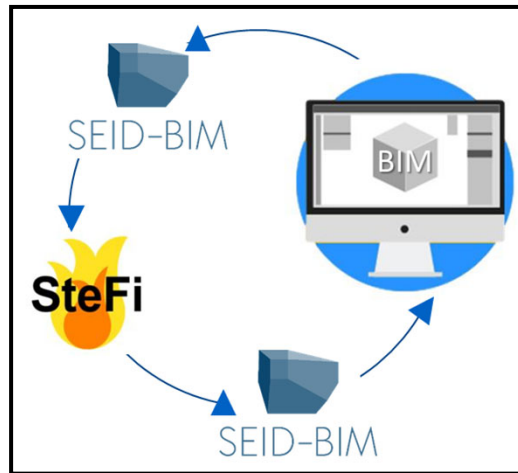
*Ref.: Beltrani et al.: "Fast track BIM integration for structural fire design of steel elements", ECPPM 2018, DK*  
*Ref.: Andersen & Dyhr: "Automatic and BIM-Integrated Fire Design of Steel Elements", DTU, Denmark, 2018*

## Integrated SFS design



**Steel in Fire**

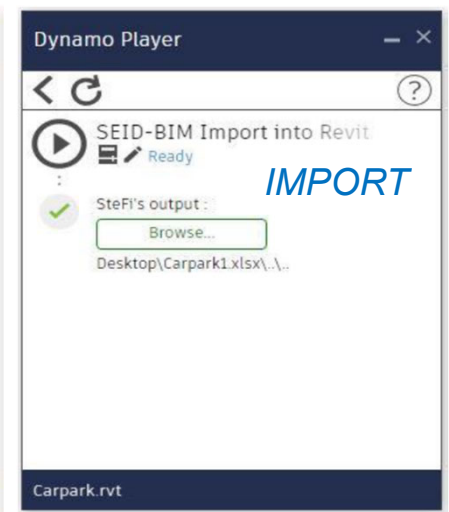
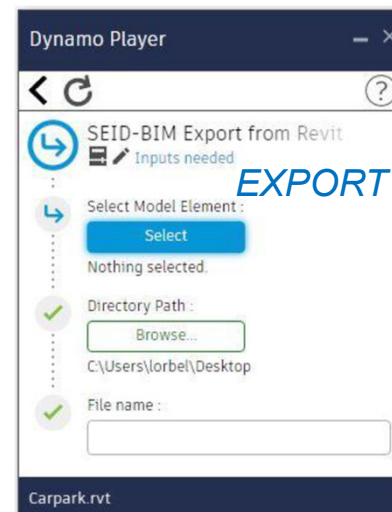
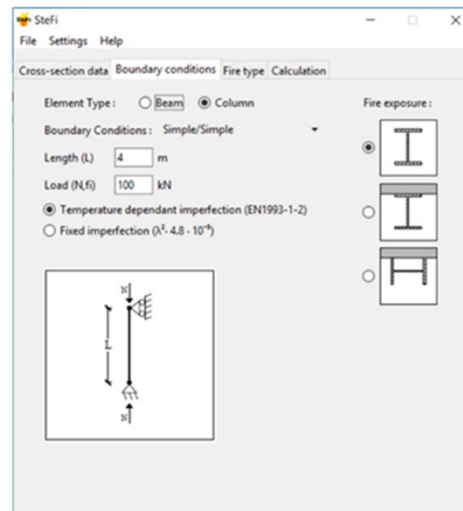
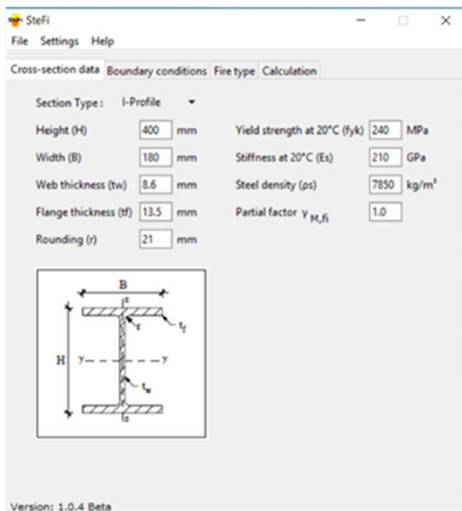
- Standard and Parametric fire
- 0.2% and 2.0% strength
- Libraries for steel profiles and insulation materials
- Calculation of load capacity
- Design of required insulation



**Struct. Exp./Imp.  
of Data for BIM**

SEID-BIM

- Export geometry and material propert. of a steel element from Revit
- Import geometry and material properties of the insulation into Revit
- Compatible with the IFC format



**DOWNLOAD:** <https://www.byg.dtu.dk/Forskning/Publikationer/Software/SteFi>



## OUTLINE

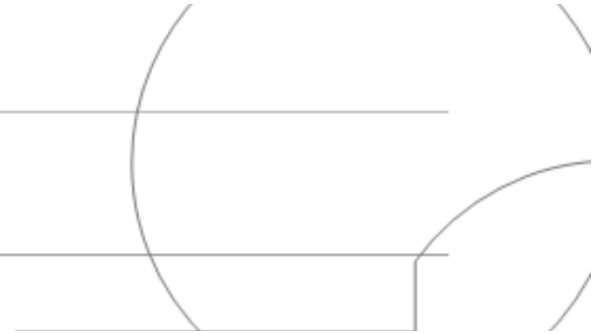
-  *Recent major fires*
-  *Design shortcomings*
  - *Design fire*
  - *Structural design*
  - *Design process*
-  *Conclusive remarks*



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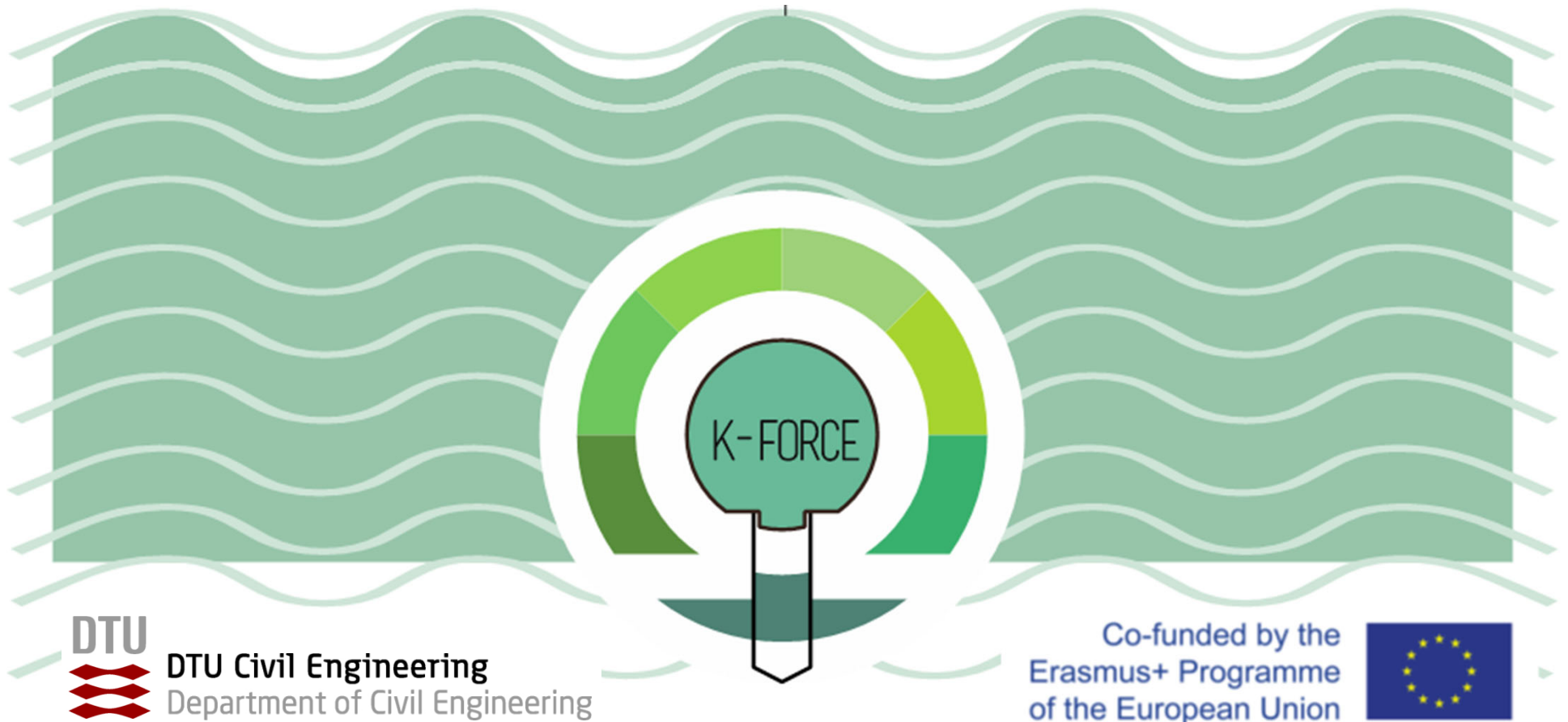
## Conclusion

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- Major fires and collapses of buildings and car parks indicate shortcoming in current methods for SFS design methods
- Design issues are highlighted on both thermal and mechanical assumptions
  - Fire: local fires in car parks, outdated resistance classes in modern buildings
  - Structure: neglected indirect stresses, effective yielding, neglected cold condition
  - *This is not an exhaustive list!* (timber buildings and connections, reduction of mechanical loads, uncertain performance of intumescent paint, early HCS failure,...)
- Ample margins of improvement: e.g. early inclusion of SFS in design process allows for reduction of costs while maintaining conservative assumptions





Thank you for your attention

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**Knowledge FOr Resilient soCiEty**

